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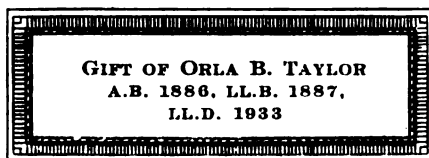
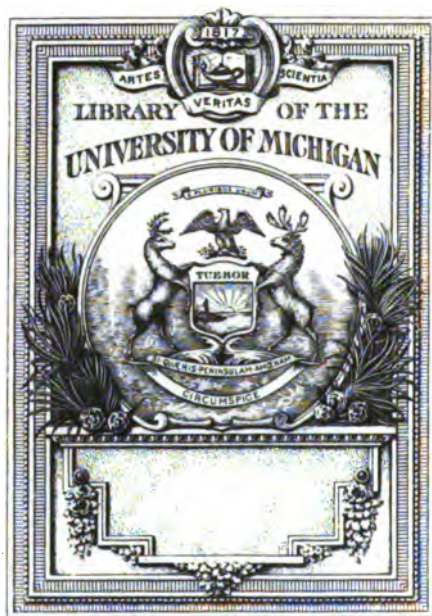
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**THE STORY OF  
NAPOLEON'S  
DEATH-MASK**



*This edition is limited  
to 500 copies for sale in  
Great Britain and the  
United States of America*









THE SANKEY CAST, FULL FACE

# THE STORY OF NAPOLEON'S DEATH-MASK

TOLD FROM THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

BY G. L. DE ST. M. WATSON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS ⌘ ⌘



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## FOREWORD

THE towering figure of Napoleon has called forth a very large number of books during the past few years : no week but sees a new volume in one or other of the three or four tongues that count in Western Europe. An apology, perhaps, is due for hereby adding to the output, albeit the iconographical, or even the legendary, side of the Great Man cannot be said to have been overdone. The story of the *truest* physical presentment of the world's chief Conqueror, Administrator and Legislator should be of some interest even to the most superficial student of his career.

I most gratefully acknowledge the assistance very generously given me throughout by Dr. Arnold Chaplin, F.R.C.P., our leading authority on Napoleon's last illness and death, whose curious and enthusiastic researches into the *personalita* and *minutiae* of the Captivity should

## x STORY OF NAPOLEON'S DEATH-MASK

some day bear such very abundant fruit. Dr. Chaplin's diligence in delving is only equalled by the readiness and kindness with which he places the result of his labours at the disposal of his fellow-workers in the same field. It was he who persuaded me that this booklet—a relaxation from a more important work—was worth publishing at all, who procured several scarce documents for it and who made various useful and interesting 'finds'; the luckiest of all, perhaps, being the portrait of Dr. Burton.

G. L. de St. M. W.

CHURCH ROW, HAMPSTEAD  
*Easter, 1914*



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**PART I**  
**THE ANTOMMARCHI**  
**FICTION**



# THE STORY OF NAPOLEON'S DEATH-MASK

## I

### THE ANTOMMARCHI FICTION

**T**HAT genial American, pearl of great price to the Faculty and to Letters alike, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, impressed upon us in his most whimsical poem that, after the lapse of a century,

"there's nothing that keeps its youth,  
So far as I know, but a tree and Truth."

Had the Autocrat been with us still to-day and dipped into the ever-swelling stream of Napoleonic 'literature,' to the second centenarian he thought of, he might well have added a somewhat antithetical third, to wit, a legend of the great Emperor. Given a plausible setting, a

vamped-up document or two, and, if possible, a pictorial adjunct, for choice by Raffet or Charlet, such legends endure long after the sober facts and the grim realities are forgotten. They seem to enjoy perennial youth, and they bask in the full glare of noontide, while the Truth—the Truth of the poet, with the big “t”—though it must in the end prevail, often undergoes a periodic eclipse in its career down the successive generations.

To take an instance or two :

That raw recruit of the Italian Campaign, now a hoary veteran of romance, the “Sleeping Sentry,” still awakens in popular histories our admiration and sympathy conjoined : there is just that touch of nature, breaking all barriers down, which we are fain to discover in the lives of the great, from Alfred and the cottage-wife, or Cophetua and the beggar-maid, down to the Man of Destiny himself. But, as Napoleon in person observed to his faithful Las Cases at St. Helena, the Commander-in-Chief who on the night of a battle could so waste his time on a benevolent ‘sentry-go’ would deserve to be court-martialled or cashiered. That is the fable springing full-fledged from the wit of some



martial Munchausen, like Athene panoplied from the brain of Zeus: here is the insignificant molehill many-handedly reared into a mountain.

Four out of every five historians of Napoleon tell us that on the 3rd to 5th of May, 1821, as the Captive lay dying,<sup>1</sup> a tempest was raging at St. Helena. It was a fancy of Antommarchi's, like so much else. The histrian who put into the Emperor's mouth the theatrical parting utterances which he conceived *ought* to have been there, but were *not*, could hardly forbear the dramatic *rapprochement* of the Soul and the Storm let loose. And just as that Soul, in time triumphing over detraction and error, with the clear light thrown patiently upon it, has at last in our own day emerged as the great Superman's in world-annals, so, *si parva licet*, that Storm has with successive deponents increased tenfold in severity and a hundred in devastation, till one begins to fear that when Mr. Norwood Young reaches St. Helena waters in the spring, he may find the Mecca of his pilgrimage engulfed in the ocean like the Atlantis of old!

<sup>1</sup> Three dates should be borne in mind: death of Napoleon, May 5th, 5.49 p.m.; autopsy, 6th, 2 p.m.; funeral, 9th, noon.

Sir Walter Scott (1827) drew a forceful, if factitious, parallel between Cromwell's and Napoleon's deaths on the strength of that "hurricane." (In his ironical slating of Scott, Heine, adopting the "Orkan" to the letter, read into it Nature's Stentor-voiced denunciation of the slow doing to death of the great Captive.) Hazlitt (1830) deposed to a "gale" that "uprooted all the plantations of gum-trees."<sup>1</sup> Forsyth (1853) piled Pelion upon Ossa and recorded a "raging and howling tempest" *plus* a "violent hurricane." Like Hazlitt, Baring Gould (1897) extirpated the gum-trees, and did it, moreover, on the 6th, as the "death-day." Abbott (1882) with true transpontine fervour, rioted thus: "A tornado of frightful violence swept the bleak rocks. Every tree which Napo-

<sup>1</sup> During the residence of Napoleon at Longwood the vegetation consisted mainly of gumwood trees, and there was nothing of the luxuriant flora of Plantation House. Apparently official slackness was responsible for the poor show of trees, *cf.* :—

"January 18, 1805. With respect to Long Wood, we have frequently given directions for planting it, but are concerned to observe, by Lt.-Col. Cock's minute, that to the present time there are only a few miserable dwarfish Gum-Wood Trees upon it. Our orders therefore to this effect must have been neglected." (*Abstract of the Laws and Ordinances relating to Land and Tenures of the Island of St. Helena*, 1673-1813, p. 73. B.M. Tracts.)

leon had cherished was torn up by the roots and laid prostrate in the mud." And so on, through Germans like Sporschil (1846) who revelled in a "fearful raging storm," or Dutchmen like Valfleury (1907) who repeated Forsyth's double dose, to a whole succession of hyperbolic Frenchmen, of whom Martin de Gray (1853) strikes the weird note with his suggestion of doom: "A fearful tempest broke over St. Helena, and this fatal island seemed on the verge of being swallowed up by the sea." And Karr (1838) was nearly as bad.

What is the fact?

A ship's log is the one document, perhaps, that never distorts and never exaggerates. True to its origin, it is impersonally and unimaginatively wooden. A ship is "she" and keeps a "husband"; a log is "it" and a mere automaton posts it: a century ago it was the very antipodes of an epitaph. Well then, the Logs (Captain's, Master's and Ship's) of the *Vigo* and the other three men-of-war off Jamestown, the *Rosario*, *Heron* and *Beaver*,<sup>1</sup> concur in saying that on the days in question, 3rd, 4th and 5th of May, the weather was very generally

<sup>1</sup> Log of the *Abundance* storeship missing for this date.

fine, with a few cloudy spells, the sea was moderate and the wind was the habitual healthy 'trade' from the S.E. or S.S.E., locally known as the "parish doctor." The *Rosario* notes some haze on the 3rd, and the *Heron* an occasional rain-squall on the 4th. At no time was there anything at all approaching a storm or hurricane, and so fleeting were the adverse breaks in the weather that the Admiral's Journal records nothing but "fine and moderate" for the whole period. Up at Longwood, on the lofty and open plateau, the breeze was fresher, and *one* small willow-tree, which Napoleon himself had roughly earthed on the brink of a fish-pond, collapsed into the water. And there was this excuse: it was a weeping-willow.

That was positively all.<sup>1</sup>

The dreary Rock in the South Atlantic, which was Napoleon's prison for the last five and a half years of his life, was bound to be, in the conditions that prevailed, the birthplace or the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rev. Bowater T. Vernon's *Trifles from St. Helena*, 1848 (p. 169), in which the writer expresses his surprise at Scott's rhetoric. There were no tempests at St. Helena during the captivity. The worst they ever had was a heavy surf, or 'rollers,' which did damage in the harbour, e.g. March 6, 1821.

forcing-ground of many a fiction—fables more or less effectively tricked out, when they were not squalid and calculated lies. Few episodes in modern history have so baffled the diligent seeker after the truth as the Captivity; and that not so much from the lack of material as from its unreliability, wholly or in part.<sup>1</sup> The atmosphere is so charged with invention, calumny, innuendo, make-believe, suppression, conjecture, gossip, scandal, bad blood, *espionage* and so forth, that even the most robust inquirer is gradually and unconsciously demoralized, and ends by casting away the buckler of his impartiality.

Of all the legends privily begotten at St. Helena—wherever their imprimatur may in time have been granted—that of the AN TOMMARCHI DEATH-MASK OF NAPOLEON has achieved the most note: to a constitutional toughness it has united a perdurable plausibility. It is of this fiction that I purpose treating here with some fullness. It has not been dealt with before on this side of the Channel, whilst the only foreign article devoted thereto (which

<sup>1</sup> This is incisively brought out by Lord Rosebery in *The Last Phase*.

we shall consider anon) was based upon so execrable a translation of a cardinal English document, that what light it may have shed upon one point was hopelessly disannulled by the error enveloping the next. It is fitting we should investigate the question in this country ; for our so doing may avail to an act of tardy reparation, which should be the more welcome to Englishmen, seeing that it springs from justice to engraft upon patriotism.

Let us first trace the Fiction ; then perpend the Facts ; and lastly draw certain conclusions with the aid of a very concrete ' document ' recently unearthed.

But, *in limine*, two statements must be made, neither of which begs the question : the one, that no faith whatever can be reposed in Antommarchi's unsupported word. By the universal consent of all St. Helena students and writers, his book is a tissue of vulgar boasting and deliberate falsification. A trained anatomist and a skilled prosector, Antommarchi at least made common cause with those tooth-drawing charlatans of a Teniers or a Jan Steen by virtue of his mountebank style ; which chiefly marks out his Journal from those of Las Cases, O'Meara

or Gourgaud. The other, that the death-mask of Napoleon was taken by Francis Burton, M.D., Surgeon of the 66th Regiment of Foot, uncle of the famous Sir Richard Burton, one of the seven British surgeons and assistant-surgeons present at the autopsy on the 6th of May, and one of the five surgeons who signed the official report.

We may follow the progress of the Antommarchi Legend with very fair consequence down the century or so of its existence, punctuated as it is at frequent, if not regular, intervals with press paragraphs or passages in reviews, with letters or polemical documents, with allusions or criticisms in biographical accounts. Of the five or six score histories of Napoleon, in various languages, at the British Museum,<sup>1</sup> whether of the whole life or of the 'last phase' only, nearly two dozen make some mention, however brief, of the mask or the moulding, either in text or by illustration; and we may add as many references again in other places. Even the curtest intimation, the mere mention of Antommarchi's name, was bound to fortify the

<sup>1</sup> Two only, of any moment, appear to be lacking: C. T. Heyne's *Geschichte Napoleons von der Wiege bis zum Grabe* (1839); and H. T. Chappuis' *Napoleon de Groot* (1905).

fiction—*vires acquirit eundo*—and though a damning disproof was very publicly uttered as soon as his imposture had taken shape, it seems to have had no more effect in checking it than the paper hoop conspicuously upheld has in staying the career of the circus amazon.

The first putting-forth of the Legend—whose genesis may be traced to St. Helena at the end of May, 1821—was by means of an "Extract of a Letter, dated Paris, September 8, 1821," which appeared under the ægis of the *Times* of September 11th, to the extent of two-thirds of a column of small type. It began, "I dined yesterday with Dr. Antomarchi [*sic*], Napoleon's physician," and purported to give the various items of a conversation—"many interesting gleanings"—held with the Italian surgeon in the French metropolis on September 7th.

For some years past all manner of counterfeits, hoaxes and mystifications relating to Napoleon had been steadily foisted upon the Press and upon a reading public more or less openly avid of news of the august Captive. The masterpiece in that line, you remember, was Lullin de Chateaufieux' *Manuscrit venu de Sainte-Hélène*, which achieved a perfect furore as the *ipsissima*.



*verba* of its alleged autobiographer. After the demise of the Emperor, proceeded a regular avalanche of personal testimonies, printed either at the time, or, more often, years later, in which the pious deponent, prompted by a very pardonable vanity, declared that he or she had been the last person to see Napoleon alive, or dead in his coffin, as the case might be, or had exclusively caught his parting utterance, moistened his lips *in articulo*, closed his eyes in death, and so forth.<sup>1</sup> The *Times*, therefore should have been on its guard against such a letter as the above ; especially seeing that it contained, on an average, an error per paragraph ; for instance, that Bonaparte had never met Lady Holland. But it printed it without demur, and

<sup>1</sup> The most amusing pretension to the 'closing of the eyes'—which pious duty, by the way, both Bertrand and Montholon claimed to have performed : why was Antommarchi so modest ?—is contained in the following quotation from the *Cornwall Adviser* of May, 1840 : " It may not be generally known that there now resides in the parish of Gwennap an old woman who actually closed the eyes of the Emperor Napoleon after the vital spark had winged its flight from its earthly tabernacle. The old woman's husband, we are informed, served under Napoleon and accompanied him to St. Helena. This old woman was on terms of intimacy with and attended the death-bed of one of the greatest of men whose names are recorded in history, and whose deeds fill the mind with amazement."

in it this passage, which constitutes the public send-off of the Legend :—

“ Dr. Antommarchi found a proper stone on the Island with which he had prepared plaster, and succeeded very well in taking a cast of his [Napoleon's] bust after his death ; unfortunately it had been shipped to Leghorn, else I might, perhaps, have had a sight of it. The Doctor has intended it as a present to the mother of Bonaparte, whom he styles *Madame Mère*.”

Three things about this arouse one's misgivings : the expression “ a proper stone,” which is a very untechnical, unphysical equivalent for ‘crude gypsum,’ the term “ bust,”<sup>1</sup> which signifies the head, neck, shoulders and breast—and whoever the caster, there was never a question of casting *that* amount—and the statement that “ it had been shipped to Leghorn . . . as a present to *Madame Mère*.” Seeing it was Antommarchi's fixed intention to proceed to Italy to interview the Imperial Family, and that with the utmost despatch, had he not a hundred times rather taken the priceless and fragile treasure with him than

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Burton, to be sure, uses the term ; but never Antommarchi.

shipped it off "to Leghorn" like a bale of cotton?

But the *Times* did not closely scrutinize the "Extract"; nor did any other journal, with one solitary exception. On the evening of the 11th of September, the *Courier* and the *Sun* printed it; on the 12th the *Morning Herald*, the *Morning Post*, the *Public Ledger* and the *Star*, and on the 16th the *Guardian*. The *Morning Advertiser*, the *British Press*, the *New Times*, the *Globe* and the *Observer* all cold-shouldered it; whilst the *Morning Chronicle* offered a less passive resistance. On the 12th, that great Whig journal, of a distinct pro-Napoleonic bent and ever in touch with the St. Helena refugees and the followers of the Emperor generally, reproduced the "Extract" from the *Times* as an interesting topical item, but appended editorially this uncompromising *démenti* from a 'Constant Reader':—

"Sir. My attention was drawn this day to a letter in the *Times* newspaper of this morning said to have been written at Paris on the 8th of September. In it the writer is made to state the purport of a conversation alleged to have taken place at Paris with Dr. Antommarchi on

the preceding day. In order to prevent yourself and the public from being imposed upon by a repetition of the fabricated letter purporting to have come from St. Helena, I beg to inform you that Dr. Antommarchi is now in London, which he has never quitted since his arrival from St. Helena several weeks ago. The letter in question is therefore manifestly a *forgery* made to answer the purpose of some designing person.

"I am," etc.

That was the simple fact. Antommarchi with the remainder of "Bonaparte's Suite" had reached London on Sunday, August 5th,<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> A few particulars of the movements of sundry personages connected with the Captivity I have found in the contemporary Press may be of interest. The *Camel* store-ship, which had sailed from St. Helena on May 27th, reached Portsmouth at midnight, July 31-August 1 (*New Times*, August 3). The King, fresh from his Coronation, had gone on board his yacht in the evening of the 31st (*Times*, August 2). At 6 a.m. on the 1st the *Camel* fired a salute of twenty-one guns in his honour. "It is a remarkable circumstance that this vessel should have arrived just in time to salute his Majesty" (*Morning Herald*, August 2). At 8.30 the King sailed, *via* Cowes, on his visit to Ireland, which was to be clouded by the Queen's death on the 7th. Before sailing, he sent Sir William Keppel to the *Camel* to inquire after the health of Madame Bertrand and the other French people (*Globe*, August 6). At an early hour, Col. Nicol, of the 66th, had posted to London with despatches. Thursday, the 2nd, like the day before, was *dies non*, and on Friday, at noon, on the arrival of instructions, the whole of "Bonaparte's suite" landed

stopped at Brunet's Hotel, Leicester Square, for some seven weeks, leaving England on September 18th for Italy. There was no possibility of an interview with him in Paris, and the "Extract" was nothing but a spurious document concocted in London. On the evening of the 12th, the *Courier*, taking its cue from the *Chronicle*, belatedly noted the fabrication and remarked: "We leave the *Times* to say what

under the provisions of the Alien Act, and after passing through the Custom House, drove with some little state to the George Hotel at Portsmouth (*Courier*, August 4). Here the Bertrands and Montholon were treated with conspicuous distinction, and were visited by the higher officials, naval and military, and renewed acquaintance with the officers of the *Northumberland*, including Captain Ross and Glover and his wife (*Morning Advertiser*, August 6). On the Friday, they dined with Sir John and Lady Hawkins at the Admiralty House and on the Saturday with Sir George Cooke at the Lt.-Governor's residence. On the Sunday they all proceeded to London, and on Monday, August 6, the *British Press* (the only paper to record the fact) gave as "arrivals at Brunet's Hotel, [24] Leicester Square, General and Madame Bertrand and family, General Montholon and family [*sic*], Professor Antommarchi, from St. Helena." The London Press was uniformly courteous to the visitors, save the *British Monitor*, which termed Bertrand and Montholon "Noodle" and "Doodle" respectively. And it was "Doodle," strange to say, whose gossiped the more; e.g. "Montholon told me Napoleon might have escaped five different times; but he would not. He said his *carrière* was *finie*." (Hon. Douglas Kinnaird to T. Cam Hobhouse, September 12, 1821. Broughton Papers. Add. MSS. 36,459, f. 113.)

it can." On the 13th there issued this shuffling explanation from Printing-House Square, and it strikes as even a greater concoction than the other.

"By an oversight, an article in our paper of Tuesday, headed 'Buonaparte,' was given in the form of a letter from Paris. It was in fact written in London and addressed to Paris, whither it was, we believe, forwarded. The inadvertency was committed by a friend who was kind enough to copy for us the letter in question. The public, however, may be assured that everything mentioned in that statement is perfectly authentic."

More kin than kind! And concocted within the Square! No wonder that in the *British Monitor* of September 16th, the notorious Lewis Goldsmith, who for all his arch-slandering of Napoleon and his slimy defilement of his Family, *did* know a thing or two about the great Man, poured ridicule upon the Letter and still more upon the salvo. The little Lusitanian Jew was right: what was one to think of a London article, full of mistakes, "given in the form of a letter from Paris"? On the 14th the *Morning Chronicle* thus settled the point,

with the subsequent concurrence of the bulk of the Press :—

“ It appears from an article in the *Times* of yesterday that the author of the pretended conversation with Dr. Antommarchi relative to Bonaparte continues to persist in imposing on the public an account of the mode of life and the character of that extraordinary Man during his last moments. Impartial readers, however, will not be at a loss to discover the masked pen from which many fabrications have already proceeded, and we can assure them from the best authority that the conversations detailed in that Letter are also fabrications.”

The ‘Thunderer’ had no rejoinder to make, and the “Extract” was henceforth discredited. But, alas, the mischief had been wrought, and by that one paragraph I have quoted the ‘Legend’ had been launched for all time. It was thus doubly founded in deceit : an imposture by Antommarchi covertly concerted with the Bertrands at St. Helena, and a plausible hoax by his alleged interviewer. Given such broad-based speciousness to start off with, and the *Times*’ sponsorship superadded, what wonder that the Fiction has flourished as the bay-tree ?

For some years no public reference was made to the Mask. The Emperor's followers had returned to France and Italy ; Dr. Burton had shot the bolt we shall presently come to and had relapsed into silence, and was collecting evidence in letters from all and sundry at St. Helena, with a view to a pamphlet on the subject. All was forgotten for the time. In the winter of 1824-5 Antommarchi brought out his famous memorial, *Derniers Momens de Napoléon*, which achieved instant note on the Continent and was acclaimed by all sympathizers with the late Captive as the gospel itself—the fact being that it was the very reverse. In it the author gave this account of the moulding of the mask, and the least one can say thereof is that it was inadequate : after relating Sir Hudson Lowe's arrival to view the body on the morning of the 6th of May, he proceeds :—

“ ‘ You have requested plaster [said Lowe] to take the mask of the deceased : one of my surgeons is very skilful in this kind of operation ; he will assist you.’ I thanked his Excellency ; the moulding is so easy a thing that I could dispense with help. But I lacked plaster :



Madame Bertrand had obtained after her repeated requests nothing more than a kind of lime. I was at a loss, when Dr. Burton indicated a layer of gypsum. The rear-admiral at once gave orders, a long-boat put to sea, and a few hours afterwards brought back some fragments which I had calcined for me. I now had plaster ; I moulded the face, and proceeded to the autopsy."

In the above passage, which first embodied Antommarchi's own personal claim to the mask-making, and is thus the *locus classicus* of the Legend, there are various statements that challenge criticism, notably the sequence of events as regards the moulding and the post-mortem. But let us pause at just two things, each an index to the Italian surgeon's character. For one, the assertion "*the moulding is so easy*," gives us an instance of the airy *fanfaronnade* which permeates his whole book. It was not legitimate self-confidence ; for when it came to the trial, as Burton deposes, he dramatically drew back and preferred what I conceive to be a mere excuse to cover his retreat. The process is *not* easy ; on the contrary, the taking of a

death-mask is an extremely difficult and delicate operation ; and Burton himself, though 'successful' where the other had declined the attempt, was, after all, but an inexperienced amateur, who sadly bungled the ears. It is in the practice and competence neither of a surgeon on the one hand nor of a sculptor on the other to mould from the dead face : it is the pursuit of a professional expert. And had the casting of heads, whether in life or death, been ten times a doctor's parergon, it so happens that at this period the very least qualified for the job would have been an Italian. The first half of the nineteenth century saw the rise, and decline, of the pseudo-science of phrenology ; and the making of casts of skulls and crania was a lucrative business for the adepts of France and Germany. Bally, of Manchester, was the leading expert in the United Kingdom, where the standard fell a little short of the other two countries ; and that despite the fact that for twenty-five years Edinburgh was the great stronghold of the disciples of Gall and Spurzheim. Now, much later than this, in 1842, McPherson Adams, writing to the *Edinburgh Phrenological Journal* (p. 283), said :—

“When lately at Milan, I called on Dr. Castle, who is publishing a book on phrenology in Italian. . . . He and Count Neipperg seem to have a quantity of new ideas. . . . Cast-taking is unknown in Italy, even in the backward state in which it is in England.”

Antommarchi's vaunt again was disproved by the *Gazette Médicale de Paris* of July 12, 1834, in these words :—

“Although we do not consider, like him, that the operation of moulding is a very simple and very easy thing, above all for persons who have not had a special practice of it. . . .”

And there was no lack of further refutation. The other point one need notice is the mention of Dr. Burton by name ; and that gives us Antommarchi's calculated and cunning audacity. Here he was, by means of this very passage, wresting from the British surgeon all the credit due to him as the real maker of the mask ; dealing him that unkindest cut of all, the rape of his future fame : yet, to disarm all suspicion, he just allows him the performance of a trivial service any other might have rendered equally well. To have suppressed Burton's

name altogether might have lent colour to subsequent awkward queries ; so Antommarchi boldly bluffed and dubbed his hated confrère the 'gypsum indicator' ! It is such touches as this that distinguish the *Derniers Momens* from mere commonplace humbug.

There is one other passage in the book dealing with the mask : it is the author's garbled account of the Bow Street proceedings, and need not detain us now.

The year 1828 saw the completion of Lepelletier de Chambure's work, *Napoléon et ses Contemporains*, begun in 1824 ; and in it Antommarchi's own statement was reproduced and the first backing given to his pretension by an historical writer—neither Van Ess in 1821, Arnault in 1822-6, nor Ireland in 1823-8 having said anything on the matter. There is merely one line, on page 361 :—

“ Dr. Antommarchi, after having had the body washed, and [the head] shaved, moulded the face and proceeded to the autopsy.”

That is just the little puff of wind which helps the bark along. \*

In this same year, 1828, occurred an unex-

pected event which very soon determined Antommarchi's course of action. On October 24 Dr. Burton prematurely died of hæmorrhage of the lungs, while still on full pay. With that providential demise of the real author of the mask and the consequent quashing of the rival claim at the very spring-head, the Italian bestirred himself and decided to foist his imposture upon the public in its most concrete and tangible shape, that is, by reproducing the mask and placing casts upon the market for all and sundry admirers of Napoleon to buy. Allowing a year or more for the news of Burton's death to filter slowly through the Continent, it was about the spring of 1830 that Antommarchi, in the delicious phrase of his 1898 editor, M. Lacroix, suddenly "*remembered* that he had moulded the head of the *dying* hero." Even so might one in middle age bethink himself of some smart waistcoat sported in adolescence and fetch it from a cobwebbed trunk to see if it still fitted !

For the next three years the Italian busied himself with his projected "publication" of the mask. Exactly what steps he took, what assistance he called in, and what precise degree

of filiation to Burton's original cast—stolen and brought to Europe by the Bertrands, as we shall presently see—he stopped at, cannot of course be stated. In the meantime a couple of references had been made in print. In 1828–30, Hazlitt<sup>1</sup> had written that Lowe “offered some plaster of Paris to take a cast of Napoleon's face and some one to perform the operation. But this was declined and the plaster procured elsewhere.” And in 1833 Tissot<sup>2</sup> stated that :

“Dr. Antommarchi took accurately the impression of Napoleon's features. He has brought back to Europe this mask, on which you still can see some hairs of the Great Man.”

This last embellishment was Tissot's own ; for it would have overtaxed even Antommarchi's resourcefulness to conjure up the real hair of Napoleon on a cast taken from a mould fashioned on the head after it had been closely shaven.<sup>3</sup>

At last, on July 15, 1833, Antommarchi, “at the request of the most eminent men of the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Napoleon.*

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire de Napoléon.*

<sup>3</sup> Partly for the moulding, but mainly in accordance with a clause in Napoleon's will by which he bequeathed the whole of his hair to some score of people to make bracelets with.

Empire [*sic*],"<sup>1</sup> issued his Prospectus<sup>2</sup> and invited subscribers. The venture was in the main a financial one on his part, which he attempted to dress up with a little patriotic cant, French and Corsican. He touted far and wide, in the Press, through friends, and by word of mouth, for contributions; but his beating of the big drum failed in a great measure of its intended effect. That he soon retired to Cuba in disgust, where he died in 1838, does not concern us here. The mask, reproduced in plaster

<sup>1</sup> Rojas, p. 22 (see under 1873).

<sup>2</sup> "*Annnonce d'une souscription nationale pour le plâtre original du visage de l'Empereur Napoléon; moulage fait à Sis. Hélène par le docteur Antommarchi.*" The prospectus, thus headed, is a flamboyant composition, in which Antommarchi is described as "a generous citizen who did not hesitate to leave his country and his family, and so abandon all the advantages of a magnificent position [*sic*] acquired by his efforts, to go and reside in a mortal climate, where he disputed with death the existence of the Great Man," and so forth! Then comes the statement that he moulded the mask, and had "fine proposals" made him for parting with the treasure, but he—*âme d'élite*!—bethought himself of the Great Nation, and jealously clung to it for *her* sake. Then follows the "Commission," consisting of Bertrand, Clausel, Flahaut, Arrighi, Gourgaud and others, who were *nominally* responsible for this prospectus and for the floating of the subscription. On August 9th there is a glowing testimonial to Antommarchi in the shape of a letter to him signed by Clausel and Dommanget. One might contend that the initiative had proceeded from the Commission; but it is more likely that they acted as Antommarchi's cat's-paws (Rojas, p. 22).

and in bronze, was forthwith offered for sale in accordance with the terms of the "Souscription Antommarchi," and the first 'edition,' or 'state,' of it was stamped with a little medal of the Emperor at base.<sup>1</sup>

As we shall see, it was some eighteen months before the Prospectus was issued in England and a pecuniary appeal made to Dr. Burton's own countrymen, some of whom, the Italian must have realized, were likely to remember the true circumstances of the case: it was a risk he took cheerfully, for his purse at this period was much lighter than his conscience. Attention had already been drawn to the mask at Edinburgh by the *Phrenological Journal* for 1833-4 (p. 462) in these words:—

"Considerable interest was excited in Paris by the proposed publication of the Mask of Napoleon taken after death, in the possession of Dr. Antommarchi. This mask, which extends some way behind the ears, is very large."

'Very large,' *qua* mask, of course; being some two-thirds of the total skull—not that the head of Napoleon was a very large one, as we shall

<sup>1</sup> See plate.





"SOUSCRIPTION AN TOMMARCHI"  
1833-4. FIRST STATE



note later on. You observe the expression 'in the possession of,' which seems to leave the *authorship* open to doubt. Still, the mere mention of the Italian's name (which Hazlitt had eschewed) gave a fillip to the Legend on this side of the Channel.

On the appearance of the Prospectus in France the general public, to whom death-casts were things unknown, imagined that what Antommarchi was placing upon the market was an ordinary 'bust,' that is, a plaster or bronze replica of some marble presentment of the Emperor chiselled during his lifetime. It was in order to remove that misconception that he sent to the Press this high-falutin letter, dated Paris, 27 September, 1833, for the communication of which I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. Albert Espitalier, the erudite author of *Napoléon et le Roi Murat* :—

"I beg you will insert in the very next number of your journal these few lines, in order to satisfy the many queries of the subscribers to the plaster-cast, or mask, of the Emperor Napoleon moulded at St. Helena.

"No disfigurement, no change due to death are

visible on this impression of the Emperor's face. Despite the throes of a long and dreadful agony, the magnificent features of this illustrious head have lost nothing of that calm, that dignity and that expression of genius, which during so many years commanded the respect and admiration of men. In seeing it, one would say that the Emperor, having lost his *embonpoint*, had fallen into a deep slumber, a slight sardonic smile playing upon his lips.

"The object offered for subscription is not a bust, but indeed a plaster-cast, or mask, lacking the occipital region and the back part of the neck. It can be framed and hung up like a picture, or it can be equally well placed on a mantelshelf, or a chest of drawers, etc., or resting on a plinth under a glass case like a timepiece.

"Purchasers must see that every specimen in plaster or in bronze *bears my seal and my signature in facsimile.*"<sup>1</sup>

Which is simply the Martyrdom on the Rock as seen from the Tottenham Court Road!

But the uncertainty of the lay public was

<sup>1</sup> All but the first paragraph printed by Masson in 1909.

nothing to the surprise, incredulity and disappointment of the men of science, real and soi-disant, at the sight of the actual mask reproduced by Antommarchi. It was utterly unlike the 'conventional' head of the Emperor Napoleon, as familiarized to all by countless portraits, prints, statues, busts, medals, gems and coins. Far from showing the massive skull with the huge frontal development and the plumb-line profile of brow and chin, it was the cast of a head of average size, if anything inclined to relative narrowness across the temples, with a forehead rising in a beautifully rounded curve from the root of the nose, and a chin, asymmetrical in its two 'points,' falling behind the perpendicular dropped from the same spot. When dealing with the Sankey Cast, we shall have the opportunity of weighing the two suggestions offered by way of explanation in their perplexity by the respective opponents in the acrimonious discussion that now took place. The doctors and the phrenologists of France joined issue in the Press—there were echoes of the polemic as far as Dublin and Edinburgh—and the former, you may be sure, made the most of this striking occasion of traversing the whole

fabric of Gall and Spurzheim. Plainly, the head of Napoleon—that is, the front and sides of it, which figure in the cast, containing all the perceptive and reflective ‘organs’—disproved the theories of phrenology and furnished a ‘character’ which might have suited a hundred thousand quite ordinary beings. That ‘reading’ was supplied by the expert, if unbelieving, ‘bumpist’ of the *Gazette Médicale de Paris* (the protagonist in the polemic, on the doctors’ side) in the following terms :—

“ A precise and sensible mind, but little capable of high conceptions ; a strong memory especially for events and localities ; a rooted inaptitude for mathematics and, generally speaking, for the exact sciences ; a kindly, sweet and gracious nature ; an equable and well-regulated temperament ; circumspect to excess, even to the point of timidity : nevertheless, much pride, but tempered by love of justice ; little inclination for the arts, unless it be music. On the whole, a sound, well-developed intelligence, but nowise approaching to genius : general aptitude for a variety of subjects, but only to a feeble degree. Whatever this man’s station

in life, he will play his part in a suitable way, but he will never accomplish anything great or extraordinary. On the theoretical as well as the practical side, he will show proof of good sense, wisdom and intelligence ; but one must never expect from him either discoveries or original conception or brilliant deeds."

And the main conclusions the doctor came to were that the head of Napoleon, as revealed by the cast, was "very common phrenologically but very beautiful artistically" ; that it differed greatly from all known portraits, busts and medals ; and that it entirely refuted the system of Gall and Spurzheim. There were plenty more contributions to both sides of the debate, and the chief thing for us to notice is that whilst many people questioned the *authenticity* or the *genuineness* of the mask, none cast the shadow of a doubt upon its *authorship* : it might or might not be the head of Napoleon, it might or might not have been made at St. Helena, but it was certainly something moulded by *Antommarchi*—and thus the Legend stood unaffected. Even the phrenologists, though they all slated the Italian surgeon for his amateurish

incursion into their 'science' in his book, gave him full credit for the successful plastic performance, whilst blaming him, however, for not moulding the whole head. One of the most prominent of these, M. A. Ombros—the recognized authority in bumping circles on the 'organ' of Alimentiveness—certainly used the phrase "*il fait mouler le masque*," but it was only a rhetorical touch, like his historic present. Ombros was the most ingenious of the phrenological polemicists, and took upon himself to reply to—and crush—the *Gazette Médicale*. His attempt was embodied in a pamphlet, now become exceedingly rare and not found at the British Museum, *Etude phrœnologique du Masque de Napoléon* (1834), for the perusal of which I am indebted to that talented and indefatigable writer upon all Napoleonic and Revolutionary themes, M. Hector Fleischmann.<sup>1</sup> In it, the special pleader juggles very prettily with phrases and faculties, and such 'eternal principles' as the 'plurality of organs,' and, after invoking the testimony of an accommodating hatter, is compelled to agree with the very ordinary

<sup>1</sup> This was written before M. Fleischmann's death in his early thirties on February 3rd last.



'reading' of Napoleon's head published by his adversary and given above. But—and here is the cloven hoof!—he boldly advances that all the transcendent powers possessed by the great Conqueror and Administrator would have been shown according to the theories of Gall *in the back part of the head*, which (they thought) had not been cast and was unfortunately missing! For once in a way, *les absents avalent . . . raison!* As Holmes told us in his delightful travesty of "Messrs. Bumpus and Crane," you never can corner a phrenologist. It is "heads I win and tails you lose"—and here was but two-thirds of a head to go upon.

Whilst in France the honours were fairly easy in the great debate, with us they perforce rested with the followers of Gall, for the reason that the medical profession did not feel sufficient interest in the matter to refute them. The Dublin Phrenological Society, in December, 1834, were treated to a causerie on the mask by a Mr. Carmichael,<sup>1</sup> and there were further discussions of the cast at Edinburgh. Incidentally, the phrenological world had always borne a grudge against Napoleon for his having depre-

<sup>1</sup> v. *Freeman's Journal*, December 19, 1834.

cated and ridiculed the teaching of Gall and Spurzheim when still on the throne. With a magnanimity one cannot but admire, the only revenge they took upon him was to hold up *his* head as the greatest argument in favour of their science ! How they did it may well gravel us to explain ; perhaps from the conventional busts before 1833 and on the Ombros principle after. In 1832 the President of the French Society, Prof. Bouillaud, had vindicated Gall to his satisfaction by 'reading' a cast taken from the marble ;<sup>1</sup> whilst much later, in 1839, the noted George Combe in a lecture at Boston, U.S.A., could with full cognizance of the death-mask utter this flamboyant peroration :—

“ Napoleon frowned on Dr. Gall and his discoveries. . . . Has *he* triumphed over Dr. Gall ? No ; the cast of his own head now serves as one of the strongest evidences in support of Dr. Gall's discovery : and Napoleon, *dead*, ministers to Gall's enduring glory ! ”<sup>2</sup>

Let us leave Ombros and his colleagues to

<sup>1</sup> *Journal de la Société Phrénologique de Paris*, 1832-3, Tome II, No. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *An Address delivered at the Anniversary Celebration of the Birth of Spurzheim*, December 31, 1839. Boston, 1840. p. 21.

settle it all in the Shades and proceed with the Antommarchi Legend ; just noting, in passing, that it was at this period that Calamatta engraved his symbolical plate 'after the Death-Mask.'<sup>1</sup>

It was in May, 1834, that Englishmen first had a sight of their dead fellow-countryman's work, now reproduced and played off as his own by Antommarchi ; on the 16th of that month the *Times* drew its readers' attention thereto in these words :—

"Though Europe swarms with busts and other representations of the modern Hannibal, we believe it has fallen to the lot of few indeed to see a cast from the original mould which Dr. Antommarchi took from the ex-Emperor's face at St. Helena immediately after his death. This opportunity is now afforded the public, for Mr. Colnaghi has at present in his rooms two casts from this mould, the one in bronze and the other in plaster. The advantage in point of

<sup>1</sup> Calamatta's plate was vulgarized by the *Magasin Pittoresque* (1834, p. 345) by means of a very poor woodcut. The letterpress by Tissot accompanying it was most interesting. The writer gave personal recollections of Napoleon at various periods of his life, and rightly observed that the cast in profile reminded one of Bonaparte in 1801-2.

intellectuality of expression in the mask over all the portraits of Napoleon it has ever been our lot to see, except one or two which represent him as First Consul, is remarkable. It possesses little in common with those portraits, on which a cold, repulsive and morose character is too universally stamped, and it may perhaps be reserved to correct some false impressions in this respect. We understand that no genuine cast from Dr. Antommarchi's mould has yet been publicly exhibited."

With which excellent criticism one can concur to the full. It was very much to the point and rendered exactly and concisely what the French 'sceptics' had in their perplexity voiced in a variety of ways. It will be of interest to see anon precisely which portrait of the earlier, or Bonaparte, period the mask most resembles. Howbeit, the *Times*, whilst expressing that pious wish concerning 'false impressions' was still—forgetting a certain letter it *ought* to have recalled—giving the old and fallacious attribution. After a lapse of thirteen years the 'Thunderer' was once again 'booming' the Antommarchi Legend.

One might well speculate upon the impostor's train of thought as he set out in borrowed plumes to conquer the enemy's land with his contraband mask and his fabricated tale. For all his audacity, he cannot have lacked misgivings ; and that he suspected less, perhaps, an exposure of his guile than the advent of some rival in the field is shown by a note he despatched from Paris to Mr. Colnaghi on June 17th following, for which I am again indebted to Dr. Espitalier. In this he besought the firm to announce that "all authentic masks of Napoleon must bear his [Antommarchi's] signature in facsimile." That might have been inferred, if not from the French Prospectus, at least from his letter to the Paris Press, which must have come under the dealer's notice ; still, skimming as he was on thin ice, the more he righted, and copyrighted, himself the better.

Having taken this precautionary measure and whetted the cupidity of such English admirers of Napoleon as promenaded the West End, the Italian determined to place the cast upon our market in large numbers as he had done in France, and at the end of the year circularized the public by means of an English translation

of his Prospectus. All appeared to go well for a while, until that precious concoction reached Ireland, the birthplace of Dr. Burton and the residence of some members of his family. Here for the first time was the Nemesis aroused and Antommarchi publicly exposed. In the spring of 1835 the celebrated Irish pathologist, Dr. Robert James Graves, F.R.S., King's Professor at Dublin, the "perfect clinical teacher" of the great Trousseau's eulogy and the intrepid travelling-companion of Turner, and, I need hardly say, the eponymous discoverer of the disease of exophthalmic goitre, delivered two lectures, or rather *causeries*, before his hospital students on the subject of the dead Napoleon. A cousin of Dr. Burton, Prof. Graves had kept in touch with him to the last, and at his death had inherited some of the surgeon's papers, and had had others placed at his disposal by the family for, it would seem, an editorial purpose. The first lecture dealt with the post-mortem of Napoleon and the pathological changes apparent in the stomach ; and the second was concerned with the question of the mask. This latter was published in the *London Medical and Surgical Journal* for July 18, 1835, and the only known

copy extant forms part of the library of the Royal College of Physicians in Pall Mall. It has been kindly communicated to me by Dr. Arnold Chaplin, F.R.C.P., our leading authority on Napoleon's last illness and death. It is of the utmost interest, as giving virtually the whole story of the mask-making, and I reproduce it in full. Written as it was fourteen years after the events it relates, it betrays here and there a few inaccuracies and inconsistencies and probably does not always interpret Dr. Burton quite correctly : there is one rather serious mistake in it, and one omission of some moment. These I shall point out in due course ; and I shall endeavour to harmonize this narrative with Dr. Burton's more official account, given later. It was printed as follows :—

“THE MASK OF NAPOLEON NOT MADE  
BY ANTOMMARCHI.

“In my last lecture I communicated the description of the morbid appearances observed in Napoleon Bonaparte's stomach ; these particulars, long ago published, I read from the original manuscript account of the autopsy of Bonaparte, written during the examination of

the body, and in the room where the autopsy was made. This curious and valuable document is signed by all the English medical officers present, and, among the rest, by my cousin, Dr. Burton, whose family has most obligingly communicated to me this and various other interesting papers relating to circumstances connected with the bust of Napoleon, which ought to be made more generally known.<sup>1</sup>

“Before I enter on the detail of these circumstances, it is right to mention that Dr. Burton was a man, not only of great ability, but of the highest character for honour, gentleman-like conduct and strict unbending principles. If ever there existed an officer in the British service whose word could be implicitly relied on, it was Dr. Burton. He was held in the greatest estimation by the professors in Dublin, under whose auspices he commenced his surgical studies; and there was not a medical officer in the army whose skill, diligence and trustworthiness were

<sup>1</sup> Error. The *original* document was written in the hand of Dr. Shortt, and signed by the five doctors, Shortt, Arnott, Mitchell, Burton and Livingstone. It was sent by Lowe to Lord Bathurst on May 7th, and passed into the archives of the Colonial Office, where it now figures (*C.O. Records*, 247/31, No. 369, Enclosure). What Burton possessed was doubtless a copy, with autograph signatures.



more highly thought of by Sir James McGregor, the head of the department. I am thus particular in fixing the standard of Dr. Burton's moral qualities, because, as the sequel proves, they form part of the internal evidence of the truth of the following narrative.<sup>1</sup> I may further observe that Dr. Burton was for many years surgeon for the Fourth Regiment of Foot during the war, and, by means of his skill and active humanity he became such a favourite with his brother officers that, on his leaving the regiment, they presented him with an address and a piece of plate. Those who know the service will be best able to appreciate the value of such a testimony. After the termination of the war he resided in Edinburgh for some time, where he graduated, and then, at the special request of Sir James McGregor, he again went on active service, took charge of the Sixty-sixth Regiment<sup>2</sup> and proceeded to St. Helena.

"It is here our narrative commences, and certainly, if those who surrounded Napoleon during the latter period of his life, and have so profitably published him after his death—if the authors

<sup>1</sup> For Lowe's opinion of Dr. Burton, see *post*, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> In December, 1819.

of those volumes of private anecdotes, mingled with a relation of facts of historical importance, have been as regardless of truth in working out their details as were some of the members of Napoleon's suite in transactions I am about to relate, the world runs no inconsiderable risk of being deceived with regard to all matters connected with the Court of Bonaparte. It is singular enough that, though often solicited, this great man never submitted to the operation of having a mould taken from his head,<sup>1</sup> and, consequently, when he died, it became an object of the greatest importance to supply this deficiency. It is to Dr. Burton, and to him alone, that posterity are indebted for the mask now mendaciously claimed by another, for I have before me a 'Prospectus for publishing by Subscription the Mask of Napoleon, cast in the Original Mould, taken from the face of the Emperor immediately after his Death, by Dr.

<sup>1</sup> There was nothing singular, given that Napoleon refused even David's request for a sitting, and the painter had to "visualize" him at odd moments. The operation not only takes time, but is attended with the greatest discomfort, sometimes with positive danger to the existence of the 'patient,' especially when there is a determination of blood to the head or an apoplectic tendency. Napoleon's life was too precious to turn upon the unimpeded action of a small quill in one nostril.

*Antommarchi.*’ Never was a more daring or a grosser imposition palmed upon the world ! Let us hear Dr. Burton’s account of the transaction.

“ ‘ I arrived here<sup>1</sup> from the Cape on the 31st of March, at which period it was known that Bonaparte was in bad health ; the nature and extent of his disease, however, were only known to those immediately concerned. He gradually became worse, and about the latter end of April the symptoms became very alarming. On May 5th, about half-past six in the evening,<sup>2</sup> he expired. At six the next morning<sup>3</sup> I saw him, in presence of his own staff, the Governor, and his staff. Bonaparte’s countenance was then certainly the most striking I had ever beheld ; the sensation I experienced I can never forget, viewing him thus laid low who had once ruled the greater part of the civilized world with an iron hand, his countenance still expressive of that commanding tone which he assumed even to his last moments, and his capacious forehead indicating, according to the doctrines of phrenology, that his mental faculties were fully

<sup>1</sup> St. Helena. Written apparently about the end of May.

<sup>2</sup> Strictly, 5.49.

<sup>3</sup> Strictly, just after 7.

developed.<sup>1</sup> This last circumstance struck me so forcibly that I immediately proposed to the Governor to take a bust of him in plaster of Paris.<sup>2</sup> Marshal and Madame Bertrand were equally anxious that it should be done. I therefore set to work, but the shops in this island not being supplied with that article,<sup>3</sup> I was obliged to have it picked up in a crude state at the other extremity of the island, for which purpose the Admiral sent his boats. This, however, occupied so much time, that forty hours elapsed after his death before the plaster was ready.<sup>4</sup> The French people wished Dr. Antommarchi, Bonaparte's physician, to execute it, but seeing the plaster, which was of a bad description, he declined attempting it, as he said it could not possibly succeed. As, however, I have always made it a point not to give up anything as impracticable until I have made a trial, I set to

<sup>1</sup> A pious opinion. As the actual maker of the mould, Burton, of all men, must have realized, before writing this letter, that Napoleon's frontal development was unexpectedly small; and he might have anticipated the sceptical surprise and disappointment of the phrenologists on seeing the cast in 1833-4.

<sup>2</sup> In his official letter to the *Courier*, Burton states that he had made the proposal already *before* the death of Napoleon (see p. 125).

<sup>3</sup> See p. 146.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 147.

work, and fortunately succeeded to my great gratification and that of all present. The likeness is admirable for the time it was taken. The badness of the plaster prevented me from taking more than one bust from the model,<sup>1</sup> and this bust Madame Bertrand seized upon and would not give it up [*sic*], although I promised her the best that could be executed in England, where plaster of Paris can be had of the best description. Marshal Bertrand and she have, however, promised me a bust from it as soon as they arrive where it can be executed. It will then be in my power to multiply them as much as I wish. I regret the more not being able to procure good plaster here, as I intended to have sent a bust to you as a matter of curiosity.'

"In this account Dr. Burton does not mention some particulars which I have often heard him himself relate, and which were known at

<sup>1</sup> i.e. one cast from the mould. In this letter, and in the next one quoted by Graves, Dr. Burton uses the term *model* for *mould*. In his letter to the *Courier* he is more strictly technical. By *bust* he means the *cast*, throughout. Dr. Graves himself is more confusing, and does not keep to mere harmless synonyms quite obvious to the conversant reader. He repeatedly mixes up *cast*, *mould*, *bust* and *mask*. As we shall see later (p. 119), this sentence proves Burton's inexperience in death-mask making. Only one cast *could* be taken.

the time to every British officer then in St. Helena. Dr. Burton had undergone great fatigue in collecting the crude gypsum, which was only to be found in small quantities, and in remote places difficult of access. In so hot a climate time was precious, as every hour threatened to destroy for ever the likeness the dead bore to the living ; consequently Dr. Burton was obliged to search for the gypsum by torchlight. But for the assistance of the Admiral, who kindly sent several boats on this service, his efforts would have been unavailing.

“ When he had satisfied himself as to the perfect success of his undertaking, he went back to his quarters to enjoy some refreshment.<sup>1</sup> Here he informed the authorities and his brother officers that the result had exceeded his most sanguine expectations. They wished to see the bust,<sup>2</sup> and upon being told that it was at Longwood, one high in rank, and who well knew the value of a courtier's solemn promise, immediately exclaimed : ‘ You have been deceived, you will never see the mould<sup>3</sup> again.’ Dr. Burton said that it was impossible that an attempt

<sup>1</sup> Burton himself, in his letter to the *Courier*, gives quite a different version of all this episode.

<sup>2</sup> Cast.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

should be made to violate an agreement entered into before so many witnesses, for besides himself and Madame Bertrand, there were present Count Montholon, Dr. Rutledge, and Mr. Payne,<sup>1</sup> who could all testify as to the terms made by him before he commenced the execution of the mould.<sup>2</sup> He immediately returned to Longwood, and found that the suspicions of his brother officers were justified by the event, for the mould<sup>3</sup> was removed during his absence, and it never again came into his possession. It appeared, however, that the theft was committed by persons rather unskilled in their vocation, for the only part which was taken away was the mask, or that part of the mould<sup>4</sup> corresponding to the mere face, and not including the ears or the upper part of the forehead, and not extending downwards beyond the turn of the chin. The rest of the mould<sup>5</sup> was left behind, obviously because its import and value were not understood by those who removed the mask; in fact they did not comprehend the meaning of the remaining portions of the mould.<sup>6</sup> These Dr. Burton immediately

<sup>1</sup> The house-painter and decorator, attached to Longwood.

<sup>2</sup> Cast.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*    <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*    <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*    <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

removed, and this explains the reason why Antommarchi, the pretended maker of the mould, did not and could not publish more than the stolen mask.<sup>1</sup> Was not the head of Napoleon worthy of a cast? Were the scientific men of Europe indifferent as to the form, shape [*sic*], or size, as to the phrenological development of such a man? Certainly not.

"When, to use his own phrase, Antommarchi *conceived the happy idea of taking a cast, in plaster, of that illustrious face*, why did he not also conceive the happy idea of taking a cast, in plaster, of that illustrious head? The reason is simple—his was not the conception, his was not the execution of this *happy idea*! Nay, when the plaster had been collected and prepared by Dr. Burton, Antommarchi actually refused to undertake making the mould. This appears from the following letter addressed by Dr. Burton to Madame Bertrand :—<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is Dr. Graves' chief error. Whatever precise meaning one attaches to '*mask*,' the part of the cast stolen was Dr. Burton's "face-part," i.e. the part *containing*, and not merely *consisting of*, the face: it comprised nearly two-thirds of the total skull and more than half the cranium. Had Dr. Graves seen one of Antommarchi's "publications," or even a drawing of it, he would hardly have made this statement.

<sup>2</sup> It appears even more strongly from Burton's letter to the *Courier* (see *post*, p. 126).



“ ‘ JAMES TOWN, ST. HELENA.

“ ‘ *May 22nd, 1821.*

“ ‘ MADAME,—As I find that the final arrangement for the embarkation of the 66th Regiment has been made,<sup>1</sup> and that it prevents my having the honour of accompanying you in the same ship to Europe, I am extremely anxious respecting the bust of Napoleon,<sup>2</sup> which with such infinite pains I succeeded in forming. You will, Madame, I trust, excuse the liberty I take in addressing a letter to you on the subject, arising as it does from a desire of intruding as little as possible, at a period when you are so much occupied; at the same time [I am] anxious to lay before you a statement of facts in a more clear manner than I believe has yet been done. My original intention was to have taken from this bust another model,<sup>3</sup> so as to have enabled me to have left one with you ;

<sup>1</sup> The 66th sailed partly in the *Camel* on May 27th, with Col. Nicol and the whole of the French Colony, and partly in the *Abundance* on June 13, with Dr. Burton himself. The French reached London on August 5th, and Burton on the 9th.

<sup>2</sup> One infers this letter was ‘edited.’ At this date Burton would never have called Napoleon anything but ‘General Bonaparte.’

<sup>3</sup> Mould, i.e. a secondary mould from the original cast, from which to reproduce casts *ad libitum*.

but, owing to the badness of the plaster of Paris, Dr. Antommarchi and I agreed that it would be running a great risk to attempt it until we arrived in England. As, however, you have yourself, and others have also, informed me that your landing in England is not by any means certain, my wish naturally is to have the bust in my own possession, at the same time, I most solemnly promise, *upon my honour, that you shall have one of the best that can be executed on my arrival in London, and left for you there, or sent to any part of the world that you may point out.* This, Madame, every one agrees with me is as much as can be expected, seeing that the bust could not have been taken had it not been for my exertions.

“ ‘It is rumoured here that Dr. Antommarchi intends taking it to Italy. Respecting any claim he can have to it, you, Madame, Count Montholon, Dr. Rutledge, Mr. Payne, the portrait-painter,<sup>1</sup> and some others who were in the room at the time, are aware that he refused even to attempt it, as he said it could not possibly succeed, but finding that I was succeeding, he then lent his assistance. I shall,

<sup>1</sup> Rubidge.

notwithstanding, with the greatest pleasure let him have a bust, *but I positively protest against his having the original.* The world will certainly agree with me, that it would be a great injustice were I not to get both the credit and possession of my own work. As well, indeed, Madame, might the portrait be taken from the artist<sup>1</sup> who executed it a little before I succeeded in the cast. I beg also to mention to you that I am in possession of the back part of the head, without which the bust will be imperfect in those parts which mark so strongly the character of a great man. On considering this statement of facts, I trust you, Madame, will not refuse to send me the bust, and I beg leave to repeat, in an equally solemn manner, the promise I have given above, that you and Dr. Antommarchi shall each have the best that can be executed in London. I have the honour to be, Madame, with profound respect,

“ ‘Your most obedient humble servant,

“ ‘FRANCIS BURTON, M.D.,

“ ‘*Surgeon, 66th Regt.*’

“It need scarcely be remarked that Dr. Burton’s letter was answered in a most un-

<sup>1</sup> Rubidge,

satisfactory way, and that he had not the most remote chance of again getting possession of the mould<sup>1</sup> while the late emperor's suite remained in St. Helena. When they arrived in London,<sup>2</sup> he immediately applied to the Revenue Office and to the Lord Mayor,<sup>3</sup> and deposed to the fact that Madame Bertrand was in possession of what belonged to him; he sought and demanded inquiry, but it was declared by the magistrates<sup>4</sup> that they could not, on Dr. Burton's deposition concerning a fraud, said to have been committed at St. Helena, lay a detainer on the property of the accused in England; and so the matter ended. Dr. Burton kept the mould of the head,<sup>5</sup> while the mask was taken to France.

"It is particularly to be observed that the mask of Napoleon was never *publicly claimed* by Antommarchi as having been conceived or made by him, as long as Dr. Burton was alive.<sup>6</sup> So bold a step Antommarchi was not prepared

<sup>1</sup> Cast.

<sup>2</sup> Better, when *he* arrived. "They" had preceded him by four days.

<sup>3</sup> Very doubtful (see p. 131, note).

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Birnie at Bow Street (see *post*, p. 121).

<sup>5</sup> i.e. the back part of the cast.

<sup>6</sup> Graves forgets Antommarchi's book published in 1825.

to take ; but when Dr. Burton, who died suddenly of pulmonary apoplexy, had been some years in his grave, and when it was believed by Antommarchi and his accomplices that all means of exposing their fraud had been lost or forgotten, then, indeed, he comes forth and proclaims to the world the well-kept secret of his own merits ! It is disgusting to hear such a man speak of his disinterestedness, as he does in the following terms in his Prospectus published in Paris in 1833 and republished in London in 1835 : ‘ Dr. Antommarchi brought it with him to Europe, and placed it in the hands of a friend in a foreign land. Most advantageous offers were made to him for the purchase of this precious relic, presenting as it did a field for a vast speculation. The Doctor, however, did not believe himself at liberty to dispose of a property which he considered ought to become that of the French nation whenever it ceased to be his.’ To conclude, it is to Dr. Burton, and not to Antommarchi, that France and Europe owe this inestimable mask.”

Such was Graves’ lecture ; and he added, when printing it, this footnote :

“ I have a great mass of letters from different persons addressed to Dr. Burton, and which attest the truth of the above short narrative. I had intended entering more at length upon the subject in a separate publication, but have been obliged to abandon my original design from want of leisure.”

It is much to be regretted that this brilliant man, who, over and above his clinical practice and his professional writings, was wont to deliver, often extempore, two or three masterly lectures a week, some of which, according to Trousseau, achieved European fame, did not find leisure to make that intended publication and give those letters to the world. It would have settled the question for all time, and nipped the Legend in the bud. The editorial introduction in the *London Medical and Surgical Journal* was brief, and contained a pious wish to the address of Antommarchi which raises a smile nowadays :—

“ We doubt not but our readers will feel highly interested in the account of the Mask of Napoleon which we publish in this day's number. The truth of the statement appears

manifest ; and it will be difficult now for Dr. Antommarchi to appropriate to himself the honour which ought to belong exclusively to Dr. Burton.

“ That so faithful a memorial as a mask taken from the features of the hero, who astonished the world with his achievements, is in existence is gratifying ; but much more pleasing will it be to find that Dr. Antommarchi, moved to a late repentance, restores the mask to that portion of the model which is still in the possession of our countrymen.<sup>1</sup> The character of the head, as well as of the face, might then be represented with fidelity, and the admirers of Napoleon receive from the hands of art a resemblance of him which would be valuable in proportion to its truth.”

Dr. Graves must have been sadly disappointed with the little effect produced by his vindica-

<sup>1</sup> If this is written with authority, it proves that the back part of the cast, retained by Dr. Burton, was still in existence at this date, which is quite possible. One puts little faith in Mrs. Ward's melodramatic and confused version, quoted by Lady Burton (see p. 83).

*Model* is here used for *mould* ; but either is incorrect, and it shows the Editor had not quite grasped the facts, and by his use of the words ‘ *face* ’ and ‘ *features* ’ that he had not seen the 1833-4 cast published by Antommarchi and exhibited at Colnaghi's some fifteen months before this.

tion of his late cousin. His sensational revelation—for such it was—left no permanent mark, and far from exploding the Antommarchi Legend, may be said to have missed fire altogether. Given to a few Irish students in the ordinary professorial round, the Lecture, despite its subsequent publication in London, can only have reached a very limited number of people ; and probably the news of it never so much as crossed the Channel, let alone disturbed the self-complacency of Antommarchi, who was just about to eke out his existence in America. Even in Graves' own city, the Dublin Phrenological Society, which a year before had discussed the Napoleon Cast, made no reference to the exposure of its reputed author. It is true they were then waging a wordy battle over the skulls of Swift and 'Stella' recently excavated ; and in their eagerness to prove that the immortal ironist was "not such a great wit after all," because, forsooth, as in Napoleon's case, his cranium did not come up to their expectations, they found no time to reinstate a minor Irishman whilst discrediting a much greater !

In 1838 Antommarchi died at Santiago da



Cuba, and the only notice taken by the London Press was by means of a short cutting from the *New York Gazette*. He was described, here and there, as "Napoleon's famous physician who closed his eyes in death" [*sic*]. No reference whatever was made to the mask.

With the year 1840 came the great revival of interest in Napoleon due to the Exhumation of his remains at St. Helena and the Second Funeral at Paris. A flood of personal reminiscences, anecdotes and *memorabilia* of all sorts were poured out upon the Press; and notably the *Times*, in which appeared the best and most official account of the "removal of the ashes,"<sup>1</sup> furnished a highly interesting assortment extending over several months. But the iconographical side of the Emperor was almost wholly neglected, and I have found but little mention of portraits and busts and not the smallest of the mask. That the occasion was not lost by the legend-mongers, however, will be noticed under 1843.

This renewed curiosity in Napoleon's life was met in English-speaking countries by the publica-

<sup>1</sup> December 3, 1840.

tion in 1841 of "Orion" Horne's History.<sup>1</sup> There may be some significance in the fact that he, like Hazlitt before him and Mitchell immediately after, refrained from all mention of Antommarchi by name. We shall find this suppression in several other English or American writers of our own time; and if it be nothing more than a coincidence it is a remarkable one, and tantamount to a tacit understanding on national lines. Horne's passage ran thus :—

"Those who have seen a cast of the mould which was taken of his countenance a few hours after [death], will not require to be told that the transitory distortion, occasioned by physical disease, had then given place to the indescribable calm of death."

That same year, 1841, brought from Germany a striking variant of the old story, and, indeed, a very tantalizing one. For whilst Antommarchi was not mentioned or even hinted at in connection with the mask, its real author, Dr. Burton *was*, but, alas, only to be branded with failure, and that in collaboration with

<sup>1</sup> R. H. Horne, *History of Napoleon*.

another! It was the first of three "sub-legends" grafted upon the main one, all four being, positively or negatively, equally remote from the truth, and to one impartially pursuing that truth as set forth in England by Dr. Graves in 1835, the following paragraph must have been the veriest red herring drawn across the trail. This is what Adalbert vom Berge wrote in his voluminous and scholarly *Life*.<sup>1</sup> I give it in English :—

"The body was not embalmed, but the heart was preserved in spirits of wine. The two physicians, Drs. Mitchell and Burton, were at all possible pains to take an impression of his head, but unfortunately the gypsum found in the Island was not at all suitable and all their endeavours remained fruitless and in vain."

Now, where had vom Berge come by this extraordinary version—this couple of confrères joined in the gallant attempt and not divided in failure? Doubtless in an old journal he had taken a cutting from and hoarded for just twenty years.

Of all that avalanche of private letters I

<sup>1</sup> *Napoleons Leben*.

have alluded to as proceeding from St. Helena after the death, the most interesting, perhaps, was a lengthy one dated "St. Helena, May 15, 1821," which condensed in an infinity of short crisp sentences a vast amount of news and information, most of it correct. It was so good that its unnamed recipient, suppressing the subscription, at once imparted it to the London Press, where it achieved a wide currency. It was therein attributed to "a naval officer high in command on the St. Helena station." Who the writer was can only be conjectured; yet we may fine it down to two, or even to the one name. In it occurs the sentence: "I went with the Admiral to see the body." Now Admiral Lambert paid his visit at seven a.m. on May 6th and was accompanied by his secretary Vidal, his flag-captain Brown, of the *Vigo*, Capt. Hendry, of the *Rosario*, and by the well-known Capt. Marryat, of the *Beaver*. Vidal was not 'high in command'; Marryat was returning to England at once and had no need to write an account he could give much better and as early by word of mouth;<sup>1</sup> and of

<sup>1</sup> Marryat sailed on the 16th in the *Rosario*, to which he had been promoted captain. She must have carried this very letter. (See *A Polish Exile with Napoleon*, Appendix B.)

Brown and Hendry, seeing that Dr. Mitchell, surgeon of the *Vigo*, is twice mentioned, once in a purely complimentary way, you favour the former as the author of the epistle. The passage which eventually inspired vom Berge ran thus:—

“His cranium did not give the satisfaction to the craniologists that was anticipated. A great deal of trouble was taken by Doctors Mitchell and Burton to have a cast of his face and cranium ; but unfortunately the quality of the gypsum which was only to be procured from the Island was such as rendered all their attempts fruitless. A short time previous to his death, he scratched an ‘ N ’ with a penknife on a snuff-box which he presented to Dr. Arnott for his attendance on him, and has left the above gentleman 500 napoleons.”

Of the three statements contained in the above the first and the last are correct—though one wonders who the local ‘ craniologists ’ were whose disappointment was as the foretaste of the phrenologists of 1834—and the middle one is fallacious. Whether the writer had confused Burton with Antommarchi, and thrown in Mitchell out of pure compliment, or whether the

solution is to be sought in a piece of jealous and devious self-assertion on Mitchell's part—and there was much bad blood amongst the surgeons at St. Helena—is of no great consequence here, and does not for a moment invalidate Burton's claim or impair his very concrete success. This letter of Captain Brown, if Brown it be, was first printed by the *Sun* of July 9, 1821, and, to give an idea of the field of vom Berge's choice, it was reproduced on July 10 by the *Courier*, the *Globe*, the *New Times* and the *Star*; on July 11 by the *Times*, the *Morning Herald*, the *Morning Post*, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *British Press* and the *Public Ledger*; on the 15th by the *Guardian*, the *Weekly Intelligencer* and the *Real John Bull*; and on the 16th by the *Observer*; the only papers to refrain being the *Morning Advertiser*, the *Examiner*, the *Weekly Dispatch* and *John Bull*. It is a comfort to know that this particular fiction stopped with the retailing by the German,<sup>1</sup> and that we cannot trace it beyond

<sup>1</sup> Another German writer, and before vom Berge, had utilized the same passage in Brown's letter, turning the two names, however, into the impersonal 'Man.' In a scarce brochure, published at Leipsic in the twenties, entitled *Napoleons Aufenthalt, Tod und Begräbniss auf der Insel St. Helena*, now in the Broadley Collection, occurs this passage (p. 7) :—

vom Berge : that is more than one can say of the third 'sub-legend,' which we shall consider in due course. The second let us advert to at once.

Somewhere about the year 1817, when the conspiracy of silence that brooded over St. Helena, and secluded the Captive from all commerce with Europe, had been undone by the revelations of Piontkowski and Santini and the putting forth of the great "Protest," John Sainsbury, a gentleman of fortune, gifted with an inquiring mind, an enthusiastic nature, and an artistic temperament, had boldly broken away from the great bulk of his countrymen and gone over heart and soul to the side of the fallen Ruler, in the spirit of the truest and deepest hero-worship. Imbued besides with the passion for collecting, he proceeded to amass all the books, pamphlets and manuscripts he could find relating to Napoleon, avowedly for the purpose of sifting the truth from the slanders which had accumulated for years round the

"Der Hirschschädel gewährte Liebhabern der Hirschschädellehre nicht die Befriedigung die sie sich davon versprochen hatten. Man gab sich viele Mühe einen Abdruck von seinem Gesichte und Schädel zu nehmen, aber, unglücklicher Weise, machte die Beschaffenheit des Gypses alle Versuche fruchtlos."

General, the Consul and the Emperor alike. As he expressed it nearly a quarter of a century later, he "was induced by the intense interest which surrounded the subject, to inquire into the justice of the unmeasured abuse which it was the fashion of that period to heap upon the Emperor, and to investigate the correctness of those imputations which, to answer the political purposes of the day, were so industriously circulated to his prejudice." After research and much discrimination, he found those accusations "groundless and undeserved." By a natural transition, these tools of the mind he had gathered became the treasures of his heart, and to those printed and penned redeemers of Napoleon he diligently added, year in year out until 1843 or so, all the portraits, busts, bronzes, statuettes, cameos, engravings, medals, coins, gems, drawings, documents, personal mementoes and curios—snuff-boxes and the like—which his collector's *flair* and his elastic purse could well get together for him. His NAPOLEON MUSEUM, as he named the collection he had housed at Red Lion Square, became famous in the Town and procured him the friendship of scores of Bonapartists, like Lord Holland, Las



Cases and O'Meara, all three of whom presented him with precious relics of the Captivity. Both Joseph and Lucien, brothers of the Emperor, honoured him with a visit, and, needless to say, hundreds of Englishmen of note, including the Dukes of Sussex and of Wellington. Sainsbury stands out as the great pioneer of all Napoleonic collectors; and this ever-growing Brotherhood, which, like the free-masonries of Science and of Art, knows no delimitation of race, language or creed, should ever hold him in the kindest remembrance and acknowledge with gratitude all it owes to his leading and his light. To be sure, he displayed too little eclecticism and too much early-Victorian stolidity in the formation, and still more the arrangement, of his collection: to see it all marshalled and regimented round his saloon in the lithographic view he published, raises a smile. In our day he would have specialized: in his, all was fish that came to the net. He amassed a great deal of everything, and it was very good; but he was *hors ligne* in nothing absolutely, as gauged by modern standards. His relics and mementoes could not vie to-day with, say, Prince Victor

Napoleon's, his books and pamphlets with M. Masson's, his portraits and engravings with one or two Russian Grand-Dukes', his holographs and State documents with Lord Crawford's, or his satirical prints with Mr. Broadley's. Still, for all its congestion and for all its *lacunæ*, Sainsbury's collection was stupendous:<sup>1</sup> it was his life-work, the title-deed of his fame and the liquidation, alas, of his ample fortune. In April, 1843, "at the urgent solicitation of many Noblemen and Gentlemen"—this doubtless to save his face—he removed the whole 'Museum' to the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, and threw it

<sup>1</sup> There were other relic-hunters during Napoleon's actual lifetime besides Sainsbury, though on very modest lines. One such might be expected: Miss Anne Plumptre, the authoress and Napoleon-worshipper. Another is more surprising: Thomas Hardy, the Radical reformer and Fleet Street cobbler. Relics were the link between them; cf.: "D<sup>r</sup> Madam. Presuming that you would like to add to your *Museum*, I take a pleasure in sending you a relick of that *Peerless Man*. On Mr. Santini's departure from St. Helena, Napoleon Buonaparte presented him with the Green Coat Star and Ribband worn by him at Waterloo, Leipsic and other great battles. This is a part of that Green Coat, which Mr. Santini gave to me on the 3rd of March, 1817" (Thos. Hardy to Mrs. Plumptre, July 5, 1817. Add. MSS., 27,818, f. 258). And on February 4, 1818, Hardy sends the lady a "yellow button from the Green Coat. . . . You deserve it, were it much better, for yr honest defence of that Great Man and yr complete refutations of his calumniators" (*ibid.*, f. 277). The *bulk* of the Green Coat went to Sir Robert Wilson (*ibid.*, f. 498).

open to the public at half a crown a head ; and in June, 1845, it was dispersed by Messrs. Christie at heart-breaking prices. Meanwhile Sainsbury had compiled the *magnum opus* that is its only record to-day : the colossal Catalogue, or " Outline Description," as he termed it, a royal quarto of 700 pages, of which he printed a very limited number of copies for his personal friends and " for presentation to the crowned heads of Europe." From internal evidence, the work must have been done between the time of O'Meara's death in 1836 and the Exhumation of Napoleon in the autumn of 1840 : it was *projected* in 1835, when a letter from the Irish surgeon approved of the plan ; it was printed privately at the end of 1840, presumably.<sup>1</sup>

Besides a curious allusion to a ' facsimile of the cast,' the Catalogue contains two entries of

<sup>1</sup> The date which appears on the title-page of the copy in the British Museum and those in various private collections is, in red ink,

MDCCCXLV

and the book is generally assigned to 1845. But the final 'V' is, in every case, a later addition ; it does not make the same impression as the other letters of the date, and is not discernible from the back ; and it upsets the symmetry and balance of the imprint. Possibly there was a re-issue in 1845 ; but the date originally stood 1840, and it was altered with a stamp.

special interest for us. On page 14: "Cast from mask taken after death by Dr. F. Antommarchi"; and on page 669: "Bronze mask of the face of Napoleon modelled [*sic*] from the cast made by his physician, Dr. Antommarchi, at St. Helena on the 6th May, 1821."

This was quite ordinarily in keeping with the Legend; and Sainsbury thus jogged it along in the collecting world: for all his Socratic turn, he was too pious a believer in the gospel of the *Derniers Momens* to dream of diffiding Antommarchi. So, too, the *Weekly Dispatch*, though less whole-heartedly; while endorsing the mask it distrusted the evangel, and its description had a sting in the tail: "the post-mortem cast of his countenance taken by his physician, Antommarchi, whose publication of the dissection gave very strong suspicions of ——" But with the removal of the 'Museum' to Piccadilly came a sad lapse from orthodoxy, and arose the second 'sub-legend' I have indicated, and the most preposterous of the three. A descriptive handbill, or official guide to the exhibition, was on sale at the doors, and in it figured this remarkable entry: "Bronze cast of Napoleon's face on a cushion, taken at his

exhumation in 1840." This was reproduced in Christie's sale-catalogue in 1845 and in various journals. Of these, the *Britannia* expanded it thus : " A cast from that mask taken when the lid of his coffin was lately raised and the attendants perceived with surprise and awe that his features were unchanged from the time when he was first committed to earth." What ! But twenty-eight months before, the *Times* had printed in three prominent columns of small type the full, certified account of the Exhumation for all the world to read and remember, and had stated that the body had remained exposed to view for the space of *one minute and a half*, taken up by the doctor in prophylactic precautions . . . and here was some bystander credited with the making of a mask in that time and the committing of an act of profanation to boot ! Verily the ways of cataloguers are past praying for, and some pressmen's memories as well. No wonder if, on the report of such Napoleonic relics as *that*, the emulous soul of Madame Tussaud (then in the sear, the yellow leaf) was aroused to militancy, and from her *cerea castra* of the Baker Street Bazaar she issued, in the *Chronicle*

of April 17, a counterblast to the Piccadilly puff, in the *Post* of the 12th, whereby she begged to inform the vulgar and the quality that *she*, too, could show for their instruction a "blood-stained counterpane" and a bottle and a glass and the 'Waterloo Carriage' and a few other belongings of the departed Conqueror. It must have been a *piquant* duel for favour—half a crown to a shilling on the widow—and, seeing the nature of *some* of the exhibits, one might almost fancy the Maskelyne Mysteries of our youth and the Baker Street romances of Doyle—and one other in 'D'—were already present there in embryonic appulse!

Sainsbury's dispersed *rariora* had hardly found new owners before the Prince-Presidency and the Second Empire were looming in sight and adding to the value of all things appertaining to Napoleon. The mask naturally shared in that appreciation, and you might reasonably have expected more than one allusion thereto in books during the next few years. In 1845, Major-General Mitchell,<sup>1</sup> treating of Napoleon's expression of countenance, wrote: "We do

<sup>1</sup> John Mitchell, *The Fall of Napoleon*.

not comprehend how the lips shown on the mask taken after death could ever be forced into an agreeable smile." There are many things about Napoleon that baffle you, but *certainly not* his smile. Like many others, including half the phrenologists of 1834, the soldier-scribe had overlooked the *eyes*: those marvellous grey orbs that commanded or forbade, gladdened or afflicted, emboldened or abashed, soothed or affrighted, threatened or cajoled, thrilled or petrified, doomed or assoiled, and, above all, that *willed*. The eyes of Napoleon! The *rat fulminet* which fascinated Manzoni after Marengo! *There* lay his irresistible charm and the secret of his sway. And, of course, it is with the eyes you smile: for, like lip-homage, a mouth-smile is a thing unreal; soulless, inhuman, it were the grin of a Frankenstein's monster.

During the Second Empire, the iconography of Napoleon was overshadowed by the issue of the *Correspondance* (1858-69), and in the personal and historical interest aroused by those thirty-two ponderous volumes, and the wealth of discussion they led to, the Antommarchi Legend merely marked time. Still, we may note a thing or two.

In 1853, Forsyth, with us, put forth his great *ex-parte* account of the Captivity: his evasions and suppressions were so many and so remarkable—I have dealt with them elsewhere—that one need not cavil at his passing over in silence the one and only allusion to the mask contained in the *Lowe Papers*. Howbeit, seeing the extract would have vindicated Dr. Burton, without in the least impairing his libation to Lowe, he might well have given it, if only on patriotic grounds.

That same year, Bordot<sup>1</sup> illustrated his book with a woodcut of “the mask of the Emperor taken by Dr. Antommarchi”—laureated, after Calamatta. In 1854, Bégin<sup>2</sup> thusly rhetorized:—

“He, who, on the eve of his death, said, ‘*I am at peace with all mankind and with myself,*’ must have borne in his countenance the speaking image of his soul’s quietude. And this is indeed the feeling inspired by the sight of the mask which Dr. Antommarchi executed with a kind of plaster found in the Island.”

—More parting utterances; and a ‘kind’ of plaster!

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de l'Empereur Napoléon.*

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire de Napoléon.*

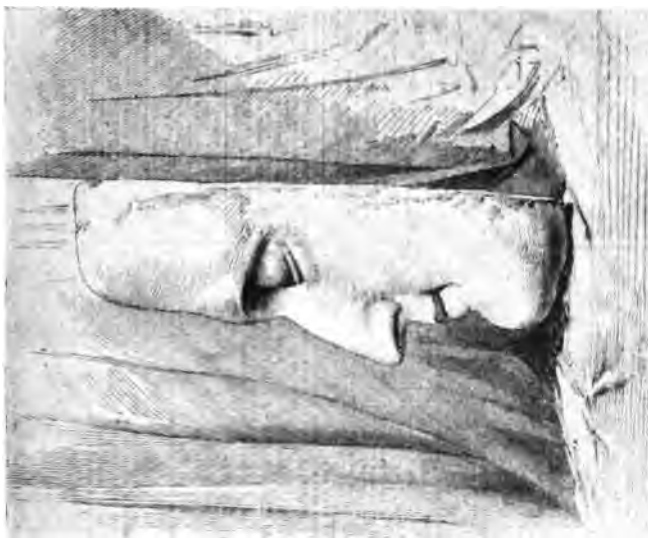


We now come to the third 'sub-legend,' the most interesting of the three and the only one to be handed down. In mid-April, 1855, the *Illustrated London News* appeared with a pair of crude and startling woodcuts of an alleged "Wax Cast of Napoleon's Face." The letter-press ran thus :—

"Of this extraordinary man scores of relics are preserved in the cabinets of the curious and the museums of national establishments ; but few of these memorials possess the interest of that engraved upon page 352—a solid wax cast of the Emperor taken on the morning after his death."

Then followed a long quotation from Forsyth, quite irrelevant, and a few particulars of what took place after the demise. Of the two cuts of the "cast," full and side face, let it be bluntly said that nothing, not avowedly in caricature, more grotesque and more preposterous exists in the whole range of Napoleonic iconography. The mouth and eyes are out of all proportion with the remainder of the face ; there is no balance whatever ; and the expression is about as human as that of a mask of Melpomene : and

the wings of the nose have the squatness and the spread of a Hottentot's. But *outré* as the main features are, they are capped—and very literally so—by a mountainous forehead rising sheer from the root of the nose to a height equal to the distance from the closed lids to the chin, and bulging out laterally over the temples into a repulsive hydrocephalism. The 'key-stone' bonnet of the City Sword-bearer, if bashed down over the eyes and rounded off a little at the corners, might reproduce the effect ; and not even in the greatest vagaries of the Imperial painters, some of which we shall in due course consider, was such a distorted and disproportionate brow ever depicted. As for the side face, it is a mere narrow slice of a profile, a vertical section drawn through the temple and the first molar, with an unsightly flat double chin, a fairly good nose, and the towering forehead above-mentioned now reared up squarely like a flagstone set on end. Only one thing is at all like this segment of a face, and that is Dr. Arnott's pathetic little thumb-nail of Napoleon's profile, recumbent on his death-bed. That was seriously meant, and one is loth to treat such a memento irreverently ; but,



THE "WAX CAST" OF 1855



really, it was more caricatural than a Cruikshank. There the profile is the chord of the arc of a large circle formed by the obtrusive bed-clothes, and the suggestion, alas, is the comical one of the man-in-the-moon at the crescent, fashioned in india-rubber and extended some fifty per cent !

And how came this precious 'Wax Cast' ? From what riotous fancy did it proceed ? The last sentence of the descriptive article may afford a solution : " The wax cast is now in the possession of Capt. Winneberger, of the Bavarian Army." *Bavaria*—you have it ! No doubt the monstrosity was moulded in wax one night by a slashed and salted young *Fuchs*, of plastic turn (who had seen the Arnott sketch), to the glory and the use of Gambrinus ! For set that cylindrical side-face upon end, let it rest on the cushion of its own double chin, and it will recall, methinks, the prosopomorphic quart-pot of a Munich beer-cellar, *minus* the handle, snapped off in student's row ! Repulsive ugliness is not always repellent : it haunts and on occasion captivates, like Mirabeau's. That would explain how this monstrosity has ensnared more than one biographer : for we shall find the

'wax cast' again both in England and in America.

We come to the 'sixties. In 1865 Huard<sup>1</sup> reproduced and elaborated Antommarchi's account, and came to the conclusion that the Italian had "proceeded to the autopsy and the moulding alone and unaided" on the ground that he had given the Emperor his word that no Englishman should approach his body after death.<sup>2</sup> Which is unduly straining the rigidity of Antommarchi's word and exaggerating the extent of his powers! But it is an 'argument' in favour of the Legend which has found serious acceptance even in our own day.<sup>3</sup> A year later Challamel<sup>4</sup> had this passage :—

"Antommarchi had him shaved and washed, and laid him on another bed. The executors

<sup>1</sup> *Le Martyr de Ste-Hélène*.

<sup>2</sup> The number of British subjects who 'touched' Napoleon's dead body was considerable. Every officer, every civilian of any standing who defiled past the body, at least raised the hand to admire it. The Rev. Mr. Vernon, in his *Trifles*, makes a point of this; and cf. : "each officer pausing in his turn to press that frozen hand which had grasped so many sceptres." (Maj.-Gen. Mitchell, p. 227. See under 1845.)

<sup>3</sup> See p. 106.

<sup>4</sup> *Histoire de Napoléon*.

under the Will made themselves acquainted with the last dispositions of Napoleon. Then Antommarchi moulded the face of the deceased with gypsum."

In 1869, when the Second Empire was hastening to its crash, a picturesque touch was supplied by the offer of José M. Antommarchi, sole surviving brother of the late surgeon, to present Napoleon III and the French Nation with the "original moulding" of the death-mask, hitherto in the safe keeping of a friend at Morsiglia, Corsica. Precisely *what* it was the family had preserved (and still, it would seem, preserves) in the way of a death-mask and was trying to palm off as the actual moulding from the face, is impossible to say: but the object was presumably either Antommarchi's original *piece-mould*, made in France in 1822 from Burton's one and only cast,<sup>1</sup> or, more likely, the first cast therefrom, the eldest, so to speak, of the 1833-4 edition. But the negotiations, entrusted to the son, José junior, dragged on and in 1870 perforce came to naught, like another and a greater fabric reared upon deception.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 158.

The heir of the Antommarchis had settled at Caracas, and there in 1870 formed a " St. Helena Museum," after the manner of Sainsbury, but *longo intervallo*. In it figured, as leading item, the " original mask " aforesaid, then a trial mould for the bronze cast, a spy-glass of the Emperor's, the bandages used in his last illness, a few letters from Bertrand, some prints, cameos and sundries. The presence of these relics in their midst seems to have interested the Venezuelans, and in 1873 José's friend, Señor Aristide Rojas, met a public desire by putting forth a fifty-page pamphlet, which was at once translated into French by one Warner under the title of "*Notice sur les Objets historiques que possède Caracas.*" This publication, which has been kindly communicated to me by Dr. Arnold Chaplin, is devoid of documentary value. It is based upon Antommarchi's own account in the *Derniers Moments*, and is, if possible, even more flamboyant than the original. It records, too, the pompous presentation by Antommarchi of bronze masks to New Orleans, the Mexican Congress, etc., with the turgid speeches made on those occasions ; and after a relation of the last years of the surgeon, deals with the negotia-



tions of 1869-70 above-mentioned. It shirks every important or controversial point and need detain us no longer. Be it added that a new edition of the pamphlet was brought out by Ed. Privat at Toulouse, in 1901, "with notes by the Antommarchi Family." The said "notes" consist of this single item of information: that the family migrated from Caracas to Bogota in 1884 and still possess "the relic."<sup>1</sup>

During the 'seventies and early 'eighties there was little question of the Great Emperor. The Man of Sédan had swamped the Man of Destiny, and as Hugo put it, it was not Lowe who had killed Napoleon the Great but 'Napoleon the Little.' It is significant that no history or biography of the Exile appeared for over fifteen years. In 1886 Professor Seeley broke the silence;<sup>2</sup> and to set off, as it were, his impartial appreciation of Napoleon with a suitable catholicity of portraiture, he vamped up, of all things, the 'wax cast' of 1855! You will find it at page 238, and in his Preface these words: "The Cast of the Face of Napoleon was taken in wax on the morning after his death. It was

<sup>1</sup> For the vicissitudes of the New Orleans mask see *Pulnam's Magazine* for June, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> *A Short History of Napoleon I.*

brought to England in 1855 and was excellently engraved in the *Illustrated London News*." You see, just the original phrase of the letter-press, reprinted, without the least attempt at verification or the slightest demur to the horrible abortion. How the learned Professor could give as his frontispiece the charming and incisive Boilly-Levachez *lavis* of 1802 ("*Revue du Quintidi*"), which is perhaps the very truest unartificial, unidealized portrait of Napoleon<sup>1</sup>—with the possible exception of Greathead's of 1803, reproduced by Fournier—and within the same covers include that despicable woodcut of the "wax cast," and think they truly presented the same man, passes all comprehension. It is this sort of thing which makes one despair of Napoleonic iconography in England and America. That is also one of the matters they order better in France!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Seeley termed this masterpiece a "mezzotint coloured by hand," which was no compliment to Levachez! It is a soft aquatint exquisitely printed in colours, and a good impression is cheap at a thousand francs. The plain Boilly-Levachez plate, which forms part of the *Tableaux Historiques de la Révolution Française*, and in which Bertaux' etched vignette of the *Revue* is replaced by his "Bataille de Marengo," is a mixed engraving, the aquatinting being strengthened with the *roulette*.

<sup>2</sup> To see the illustrations of some 'Napoleon books,' issued by publishers in London and New York in recent years, one

With a passing note of "Antommarchi's mask" on a snuff-box in 1886,<sup>1</sup> we reach at last our own generation, and the great renaissance of Napoleonic study and research. The spade-work of the past quarter of a century has been steady and sure, and far from revealing clay feet to the Colossus, as some sceptics had feared, it has but rooted him ever firmer on the rock—that granite he himself prophesied his detractors would never be able to bite. "Confidently do we predict He will continue to increase while History wields a pen or Fame a trumpet," wrote Sainsbury in his Catalogue—and it was an easy prognostic.

The 'nineties open, for our purpose, with this advertisement in the *Times* :

might suppose they had been selected by the charwoman and lettered by the office-boy! To pillory one of many: At page 432 of *Napoleon and the end of the French Revolution*, by C. F. Warwick, you will find a plate entitled "Napoleon Bonaparte. From an original water-colour by Coquette, made at St. Helena in 1816." The Emperor is standing beside a sea-wall, clad as a buck of the period, with a jaunty stick in his hand and a tall beaver on his head, against a background of Tuscan cypresses and pumpkin-plants, all within a yard or two of the water—at St. Helena! As if that were not sufficient indication, the signature appears in a corner, legible enough to the trained eye: "Tognetto, Porto Ferrajo, Settembre 181—[4]." Better it is to play for safety and, as so many have done and still do, to 'borrow from Dayot'!

<sup>1</sup> *L'Ami des Monuments*.

"NAPOLEON I. For sale, the original mask moulded at St. Helena by Dr. Antommarchi. Price required £6000."

For the third time the great Legend was being subverted by the leading organ of the Press. The figure was high ; and seeing that it was that of the " bribe " Antommarchi himself vain-gloriously averred, in his book, had been offered him in England to tempt him unavailingly into parting with his " original," it seems likely that we can trace the hand of José's family in the above announcement. But no English collector seized the occasion ; nor did the appeal fare better in America. There it was reproduced by Lawrence Hutton in his article in *Harper's Monthly* for 1892 (reprinted in book form in 1894)<sup>1</sup> and he added that Antommarchi " closed his master's eyes in death, and immediately before the official post-mortem examination held next day he made the mask in question. He said in his report that the face was relaxed, but that the mask was correct so far as the shape of the forehead and the nose was concerned. And unquestionably it is the most truthful portrait of Bonaparte that exists."

<sup>1</sup> *Portraits in Plaster.*

Unquestionably ; but not because Antommarchi took it. And Mr. Hutton testifies to that fidelity by appending an illustration of *his* mask of Napoleon—a laurelled bronze of the early period, which recalls less a death-cast than the Thorwaldsen bust, recumbent and with the eyes closed. *En passant*, let us note another American reference : a “ death-mask after Antommarchi ” from Dodd, Mead & Co.’s sale catalogue of engravings of 1893, i.e. the Calamatta print.

In 1893, too, Lady Burton published the Life of her husband,<sup>1</sup> and in a preliminary section, entitled “ The Napoleonic Romance,” revindicated Dr. Burton’s authorship of the mask. She followed Mrs. Ward’s pamphlet, a by no means ideal document, and supplied an apocryphal touch or two of her own besides. One statement is interesting :—

“ Amongst family private papers there was a correspondence, read by most members of it, between Antommarchi and Dr. Burton, in which Antommarchi stated that he knew Burton had made the plaster and taken the cast. Mrs.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Capt. Sir Richard Burton*, 2 vols.

Burton, after the death of her husband and Antommarchi, thought the correspondence useless and burnt it. . . ."

Given Antommarchi's remarkable propensities and proceedings, the avowal attributed to him above awakens a measure of scepticism not unmingled with a researcher's regret. Alas, that this sort of literary *suttee* should apparently have been endemic in the Burton family !

It was fitting and it was inevitable that at least *one* great artificer of language on either side of the Channel should step down from the realm of pure Letters and redeem for the nonce the Question of the Mask from the laborious banalities or the virulent polemics of historiographers in two tongues. The year 1894 offsets in France 1900 in England. In the former appeared *Le Lys Rouge*, and its author, M. Anatole France, writing with just a soupçon of that irony whereof he is the greatest master since Heine, devoted a passage of some length to the discussion by his various characters of Antommarchi's alleged handiwork. From Duviquet, the painter, who cannot reconcile the mask with the 'conventional' busts and medals,

down to the little lady who naively concludes Napoleon must have had the headpiece of a cretin, the views expressed have a phrenological bearing, and, as in 1834, reflect not upon the authorship but the authenticity of the mask. The Legend as such is hardly undermined ; even though Antommarchi is dubbed "apothicaire de comédie" : the effect produced is indeed much that of the enigmatical dash of the *Weekly Dispatch* we saw in 1843.

The same year M. Firmin-Didot illustrated his book<sup>1</sup> with a "mask of Napoleon moulded the day of his death by Dr. Antommarchi" ; this is one of the very few instances in which the 5th of May has been—erroneously—assigned as the date of the operation. A third contribution in the same twelvemonth we must notice, from the pen of a very expert and diligent purveyor of Napoleonic chit-chat. In the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* for 1894 (p. 118) M. Frédéric Masson, dealing with a question of iconography, wrote :—

"Of a very different value are the drawing [of Napoleon] made by Capt. Marryat one hour after the death, the sketch taken by Dr. Arnott,

<sup>1</sup> *La Captivité de Ste-Hélène.*

surgeon of the 20th Regiment, before the mask had been moulded by Antommarchi, and lastly the silhouette dashed off by Wm. Crokat fourteen hours after the decease."

The interest here shifts for a moment from Antommarchi, and the attribution of the mask-making to him unreservedly, to the portraits enumerated above. Did we not know of old M. Masson's fatal propensity for plunging haphazard at dates, we might wonder that he should trouble to fix an exact time—"one hour after the death"—for Marryat's sketch, when thereby he is no less than *thirteen* hours out! He had been well advised to leave the matter open. The merest glance at Lowe's despatch to Bathurst of May 6th,<sup>1</sup> reprinted in a dozen volumes both French and English, would have informed him that the only Englishmen to approach the dead Emperor in the evening of May 5th were Drs. Shortt and Mitchell, Capt. Crokat, and, of course, Dr. Arnott. Capt. Marryat paid his visit with the Admiral just after 7 a.m. next morning, and plied his pencil (if one must state a time) at say 7.30 or so.

<sup>1</sup> *C.O. Records*, 247/31; also in the *Lowe Papers*; and at the *Affaires Etrangères*, Paris.



(Croat's 'fourteen hours' may stand; though, seeing that he and Arnott were at hand throughout the night, they were more likely to take their sketches in the quiet of the early morning, just at dawn, twelve hours after the death, than upon the irruption of Lowe, Lambert and the whole posse of officials.)

With 1895 comes a Swedish allusion to the mask: Bering Liisberg's inadequate cut of the Antommarchi cast;<sup>1</sup> and in the same year we are gratified with the foremost achievement in Napoleonic iconography extant, M. Armand Dayot's *Napoléon raconté par l'image*, a monumental compilation which, whatever the value of the text, must stand for a whole generation and over as the prime treasure-store of reference and resort for all writers and illustrators, no matter their country. Let it be confessed that M. Dayot's treatment of the mask question is the least satisfactory part of his great performance: it may be summed up as a purple patch foiled by an unaccountable divergence. On page 377, M. Dayot, after stating that Antommarchi's *moulage* was made "*quelques instants à peine*

<sup>1</sup> *Folkeudgave af Napoleon.*

*après la mort* "—M. Firmin-Didot's mistiming—proceeds :—

" Antommarchi in his very laudable desire to fix for eternity the actual features of the Emperor was forced to apply too precipitately his plaster-mask. He only succeeded then in rendering the pain-stricken annihilation of *collapsus*, whereas by allowing a few hours to pass, thanks to that mysterious agency of death we have spoken of already, he might haply have caught for ever on a countenance suddenly become young once more, and that with the full glory of youth, just a fleeting expression, a mere adumbration of thought, a final fluttering of that great Soul distraught."

Which reminds one of Gilbert's tuneful Tartar Prince :—

" His gentle spirit rolls  
In the melody of Souls—  
Which is pretty, but I don't know what it means."

And you seize it even less in the penumbra of M. Dayot's assertion on page 442, as a footnote to his illustration of " Antommarchi's original *moulage*, now in the Collection of H.I.H. Prince Victor Napoleon " :

"In the course of this work, in the chapter on St. Helena [i.e. the passage cited above] we expressed the regret that Dr. Antommarchi should have postponed until the day after the death of the Emperor the operation of moulding. Antommarchi in his *Memoirs* gives the reason for that delay."

You rub your eyes in bewilderment ; for no more singular instance of self-contradiction was ever recorded, perhaps, in the compass of three score pages of a pretentious and many-wise masterly volume. Still, seeing that M. Dayot, on pages 375-6, tells us Napoleon died on the 5th of June, and that in the evening of the 6th Capt. Crokat embarked on the *Law-Heros*, and that he eventually gave his sketch to Lord Sanmore—for May 5th, May 7th, the *Heron*,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There appears to be something elusive about the name of the historic sloop which brought to England the news of Napoleon's demise. In his *Napoléon à St-Hélène*, published a year or two ago, M. Frédéric Masson, blindly following Montholon's *Récits* of 1847 (and Montholon, he himself has told us, "is always lying"), gave it an ominous touch and turned it into the *Achéron*. Seeing that M. Masson hustled, at the eleventh hour, into the popular edition of his book an offensive and libellous footnote about *A Polish Exile with Napoleon*—I replied at the time in a weekly review and unavailingly challenged him to make good his quite stupid and senile charges of plagiarism and what not—I will not venture to direct him to its Appendix B, where he might find a

and Lord Panmure, respectively—the less moment we attach to the *St. Helena* part of his text the better.

fairly full and accurate list of "St. Helena Sailings and Calls." So I will refer him to a countryman of his, some twenty years later than the untrustworthy Count. In 1867, M. Nicolas Batjin published his *Histoire de l'Empereur Napoléon I, surnommé le Grand*, in two compendious and workmanlike volumes. In it he gave what is by far the best and most accurate account in the French language of the death of Napoleon and the events immediately following, with the sole exception of M. Frémeaux' recent masterly performance. Not only did M. Batjin digest Forsyth to some purpose, but he must have researched the *Colonial Records* and the *Lowe Papers* as well. He was at pains to set right the numerous grotesque errors in names, dates and facts, of all his French predecessors of the 'thirties, 'forties and 'fifties, and his only trivial slip was "Tolbett" for "Torbett." And he gave Capt. Crokot his due prominence and rightly placed him on the *Heron*.

It is ironically amusing to have to record that after M. Batjin had gone to much trouble in 1867 to give French readers the correct version of the last episode of the Captivity M. Masson should come along in 1912, and in his most approved pontifical manner, and with the weight of an august assembly behind him, proceed to set them all wrong again!

Whilst on the subject of French St. Helenists, it is gratifying to turn to M. Frémeaux' more conscientious volume, which I have referred to in this note, and to bear tribute to the researches he has made, or has had made, amongst the documents in our country. One small lapse in his latest publication I cannot forbear pointing out, however. In the brochure *Une petite amie de Napoléon* (Flammarion, 1914), which incorporates Mrs. Abell's *Recollections*, M. Frémeaux quotes from Cockburn's despatch to Croker of December 13, 1815, which deals *inter alia* with the furniture of Longwood (C.O. Records, 247/7). And he terms it a *pièce inédite*. As M. Frémeaux did me the honour of reading *A Polish Exile with*

It is an easy transition from M. Dayot to Mr. Baring Gould<sup>1</sup> in 1897, for the latter derives all his illustrations from the former, his one original touch (shared by Josselyn in 1902 and Hassall in 1912) being the rendering of Vela's "*Gli Ultimi Giorni*" by "Napoleon's Last Day." The last day, or for that matter, the last fortnight, did not provide the sight of the moribund sitting up in a curule chair with a military map outspread on his knees! At page 570 Mr. Gould gives us a picture of the "cast taken after death by Antommarchi in the possession of Prince Victor Napoleon." As in M. Dayot's definition, the truth in the second half balances the imposture in the first.

With just a passing mention of Cappelletti's bookplate<sup>2</sup> in 1899—Vernet after the mask<sup>3</sup>—we at last attain in 1900 the one Ciceronian production that has graced Napoleonography

*Napoleon*, he might have remembered seeing the said item on page 177. A *personal* knowledge of the despatch in question would have prevented him from giving a reference which is meaningless, i.e. "*C.O.*, vol. 7, p. 247." The *C.O. Records* are not paged; and '247' is the number of the set and '7' of the volume. Given the date, I judged the number of the actual despatch unnecessary.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*.

<sup>2</sup> *Napoleone I.*

<sup>3</sup> And the Calamatta plate in Werckmeister (IV, 392).

in our tongue. It is an index to the historic attitude in England and France respectively that Lord Rosebery's *Last Phase* found its most pronounced admirers across, and its chiefest detractors on this side of, the Channel. It was not in the land of trained critics that were picked the most holes therein; and it was only with us that it was treated as objective, in forgetfulness of the truth that the 'historic soul,' whether of past ages or of a protracted episode, is "but an arbitrary substitution, a generous loan of one's self."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Seaton, for one, has pilloried a few errors of fact—items of water or wine, details of soap and candles—and has informed us that the attraction of the work lay in the position of its noble author. The merits of the *Last Phase* are the merits of vision and of style: it is the one echo of the Captivity which itself can captivate. As you turn rather wearily from the hot sword-play of polemic or the chill spade-work of research of the enrolled St. Helenists, from the personalities of the Limitarians and Anti-limitarians or the more courteous debates of the Faculty—Carcinomists *versus* Climatists, Pineal Glandists a bye!—to the

<sup>1</sup> Pater, *Duke Carl of Rosenmold*.

serene and sympathetic pages of Lord Rosebery, the only feeling there is room for is thankfulness that they exist. To pin down your historiographer to a date or an initial is but seemly; it is his job to insure accuracy *in minimis*: to exact it in a subjective work compact of insight and imagination is to be woefully oblivious to its prime intent and its essential charm. And even that delving of facts may be carried too far. Let us leave a corner of the veil over the Tragedy of the Rock; and that for our own behoof. Should all be found, we can no further quest: when all is laid bare our last hypothesis shall have been destroyed. It is in its way the lesson of the Sphinx or the moral of the Grail. . . . Howbeit, the day is not at hand yet for the 'last word' to be written on the Captivity, nor will it proceed from the historian, the novelist, the pathologist, or the man of letters. Napoleon's Last Phase shall be the lofty theme of a poet and playwright yet unborn, who to a Dantesque soul-vision will join the fatality of an Æschylus, and in that five years' agony of the greatest of Moderns interweave a Nemesis unmatched in mortal ken.

A truce to this digression ! Lord Rosebery's passage relating to the mask is a long and suggestive one, for a certain reason, is of cardinal value in our present survey. It runs as follows :—

“ One service Antommarchi rendered which almost outweighs his worthless and mendacious book. He produced a cast of Napoleon's face after his death. The original of this, now in England, represents the exquisite and early beauty of the countenance, when illness had transmuted passion into patience, and when death, with its last serene touch, had restored the regularity and refinement of youth. All who beheld the corpse were struck by this transformation : ‘ How beautiful ! ’ was the exclamation of the Englishmen who beheld it. But Antommarchi had to fight even for the authenticity of his cast. The phrenologists fell on him and rent him. They declared that the skull had not the bumps or the bony development requisite for a hero. Others averred that it was rather the face of the First Consul than of the Emperor—which is true. Others remembered that Antommarchi had not produced the



cast till late in 1830. Dr. Burton, the Surgeon of the 66th Regiment, claimed that the cast was genuine, but that he had taken it and that Antommarchi had nothing to do with it. We can only sum up our conclusions by declaring that we believe in the cast, but that if it be not more authentic than the book we agree with the phrenologists."

Like others we have noted, Lord Rosebery here regards the authenticity of the cast rather than its authorship. Yet, as affecting the latter, the revival, by mere allusion though it be, of Dr. Burton's claim is, in our pursuit of the facts, of paramount importance. Made manifest authoritatively to all in 1821 and again in 1835—I omit the minor incursions of Mrs. Ward and Lady Burton later—the rôle of the Irish surgeon was fated to be forgotten for well over half a century. His name had passed to its long eclipse; and it is from this year, 1900, that we must date its signal emergence. However Lord Rosebery came by it, whether in Graves' lecture or in the Press of 1821, the fact remains that it is to him that is due the sole credit of the rediscovery and consequent rein-

statement of Dr. Burton—though possibly his lordship did not quite mean it that way.

For the second, and let us hope the last, time, the egregious 'Wax Cast' is revived in 1901 in America by Miss Tarbell.<sup>1</sup> With St. Pol, she attributes it to the Surgeon of the 20th Regiment, whose thumb-nail, we saw, presumably inspired it: "Wax Cast of the Face of Napoleon. Made at St. Helena in 1821 by Dr. Arnott." Howbeit, that honours, though spurious, might be easy between England and Italy, Miss Tarbell also gives us Calamatta's plate of the "Death-Mask of Napoleon made by Dr. Antommarchi."

The year 1902 furnishes two more illustrations. Dr. Holland Rose's plate<sup>2</sup> of the "Cast at the Ajaccio Town Hall"—one of the early Antommarchi edition—and M. Désiré Lacroix' colophon,<sup>3</sup> the death-mask laureated Vernet-wise. Also to be noted is a renewal of the attempt on the part of the Antommarchi family at Bogota to dispose of their St. Helena relics, which recalls the efforts of 1869 and 1890, and the pamphlet of 1873.

Lastly, in the same year, figures this rather

<sup>1</sup> *A Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*. And see the absurd story in *McClure's Magazine* for February, 1895.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Napoleon*.

<sup>3</sup> *Histoire de Napoléon*.

important critical passage in T. E. Watson's book :—<sup>1</sup>

“ It is doubtful whether any true portrait of Napoleon exists. He has been identified and caricatured until the *real* Napoleon may have been lost. If the death-mask, claimed to have been taken by Antommarchi, is genuine, one must surrender the belief that Napoleon's head was massive, his brow imperial, his profile perfect ; for this mask exhibits a forehead which recedes and which narrows above the temples. It shows the high cheek-bones of the American-Indian, and the skull itself is commonplace. But this is not the Napoleon pictured in the portraits and the Memoirs of his contemporaries. According to friend and foe, his head was massive, in fact too large to be in symmetry with his body. Madame Junot speaks of that ‘ brow fit to wear the crowns of the world.’ Bourrienne, Ménéval and numbers of others speak of the magnificent forehead and the classic face. And yet there are two or three fugitive portraits of Napoleon which are so different from the orthodox copies, and so much like Antom-

<sup>1</sup> *Napoleon.*

marchi's death-mask, that one knows not what to believe."

After casting a doubt upon the authenticity, the genuineness, and the authorship of the mask, all three, Mr. Watson thus leaves the matter open. The criticism offered is very much to the point, though one takes exception to the exquisitely rising curve of the brow being termed a *recession*, which so often connotes disparagement. The writer is perhaps a little undiscerning of the intense beauty and purity of line of the cast : the ' Indian ' cheek-bones are not so much *shown*, and thus presumed to have existed, as *suggested* by the exceptional depression of the temporal region, due to the wasting of subcutaneous fat both before and after death. Of the Duchesse d'Abrantès' heroics on the one hand and the impress taken by Dr. Burton from the actual head on the other, one certainly *does* know ' which to believe.'

That outsiders see most of the game is convertible into the truism that those on the spot know least of what has occurred. More than one person well acquainted with St. Helena

have I questioned on Napoleon : like " every gust of rugged wings," or that S.E. " trade " which bore his ghost away,

" They knew not of his story."

In 1903 a St. Helena resident, Mrs. Jackson, informed us in her book<sup>1</sup> that " there have been doubts raised as to whether or not a cast of his face was made after death." It would be interesting to know where such gratuitous doubt was thrown. And the writer proceeds to give a fanciful version of the mask-making, distilled, through the *St. Helena Guardian*, from the reading recollections of the French Consul and custodian of Longwood, M. Morilleau, to the effect that when " the doctors " (i.e. Antommarchi and *Arnott*) had mixed the plaster-of-Paris they found they had not sufficient for the cast ; but luckily they unearthed " some argillaceous marl with a certain amount of adhesiveness "—and a generous pennyworth, too !—which they utilized, and *therefore* the cast was of two colours. As the gypsum itself, this tale is both mixed and coloured. Still the merest groping after the truth should be thankfully

<sup>1</sup> *St. Helena : the Historic Island.*

acknowledged ; that dichromatic note is *technically* correct ; only it applies, in expert work, not to the *cast* but to the *mould*—the 'waste-mould.'

We now come to a very significant date in the history of the Antommarchi Legend : yet another groping after the truth, but on a much more ambitious and elaborate scale, actuated, too, by a welcome recession from primal heresy. The year 1909 marks the right-about-face in M. Frédéric Masson's attitude towards the authorship of the mask.<sup>1</sup> He picks up the cue let fall by Lord Rosebery in 1900, starts a *fin limier* on the trail of Dr. Burton, and is made acquainted with Dr. Graves' Lecture of 1835, in French dress. He reads it, assimilates it *tant bien que mal*, perpends it and is to all intents and purposes converted ; though with an unaccustomed and refreshing diffidence, he eschews an actual *ex-cathedra* pronouncement. The fruit of his excogitation was a thirty-page article on the mask, entitled *Le Cas du Chirurgien*.

<sup>1</sup> See under 1894, p. 85.

*gien Antommarchi*.<sup>1</sup> This consists of a very casuistical defence of his earlier application of the *schimpfwort* 'barber' to the Corsican surgeon, of the citations we have had from Lord Rosebery, M. France and the *Derniers Momens*, of an extract or two from the medico-phrenological polemic of 1834, of Graves' Lecture, of a cutting from the *Times* concerning the Bow Street proceedings, and of much apt and interesting detail of Antommarchi's life both previous and subsequent to St. Helena—some of which one had already gleaned from Rojas. It was truly an ironical fate which placed before the academician's eyes that particular rendering he gives his compatriots of the Irish Professor's refutation of Antommarchi: for, in these days, when collation of documents and resort to original sources are the veriest commonplace of historical writing, it is safe to assert that no more miserable translation of the *cardinal piece*, upon which a whole article hinges, was ever foisted upon even the long-suffering readers of M. Frédéric Masson. The thing teems with errors, great and small; and I append a selec-

<sup>1</sup> *Autour de St-Hélène : Première Série.*

tion of a dozen at foot.<sup>1</sup> No wonder, then, that after boggling about in inextricable confusion amidst multitudinous 'masks' and 'models,'

<sup>1</sup> GRAVES

## MASSON

(a) "I am thus particular in fixing the standard of Dr. Burton's moral qualities, because, as the sequel proves, they form part of the internal evidence of the truth of the following narrative."

(b) "Those who know the service will be best able to appreciate the value of such a testimony."

(c) "Never was a more daring or a grosser imposition palmed upon the world!"

(d) "his countenance still expressive of that commanding tone which he assumed even to his last moments."

(e) "to take a bust of him in plaster-of-Paris."

(f) "I was obliged to have it picked up in a crude state at the other extremity of the island, for which purpose the Admiral sent his boats."

(g) "The badness of the plaster prevented me from taking more than one bust from the model" [i.e. one cast from the mould].

"Je tiens à constater le caractère moral du Dr. Burton parce qu'il ne permet pas de douter de la vérité de la narration suivante" (p. 144).

Omitted altogether (p. 144).

"Jamais imposture plus grossière et plus hardie n'a couru par le monde!" (p. 145).

"Son visage avait encore cet air de commandement qu'il avait conservé à ses derniers moments" (p. 146).

"d'en prendre un moule en plâtre-de-Paris" (p. 146).

"Je fus alors obligé de préparer une espèce de plâtre brut . . . que le gouverneur envoya chercher avec ses bateaux" (p. 147).

"La mauvaise qualité du plâtre m'empêcha de prendre plus d'un creux sur le modèle" (p. 147) [a creux in French is a mould].



' moulds ' and ' casts,' ' busts ' and ' plasters,' ' gypsums ' and ' limes,' and so forth, M. Masson becomes forwandered in a maze of incon-

(k) " the likeness the dead bore to the living."

" la ressemblance qui survit quelque temps à la mort " (p. 148).

(i) " When he had satisfied himself as to the perfect success of his undertaking, he went back to his quarters."

" Cela fait, il retourna au quartier " (l) (p. 148).

(j) " They wished to see the bust."

" Ils désiraient voir le moule " (p. 148).

(h) " Was not the head of Napoleon worthy of a cast ? "

" La tête de Napoléon n'était-elle pas digne d'un moule ? " (p. 149).

(l) " My original intention was to have taken from this bust another model " [i.e. a secondary mould from the original cast].

" Mon intention était de prendre une autre épreuve du moule " [i.e. another cast from the original mould—the opposite] (p. 150).

(m) " I shall, notwithstanding, with the greatest pleasure let him have a bust " [i.e. present him with a cast].

" Je l'aurais, malgré cela, volontiers laissé prendre une épreuve " [i.e. let him take a cast himself] (p. 151).

(n) " were I not to get . . . the credit."

" Si je n'avais ni la gloire. . . ." (p. 151).

(o) " As well, indeed, Madame, might the portrait be taken from the artist who executed it a little before I succeeded in the cast " [i.e. the artist be dispossessed of his work].

" Aussi bien, Madame, le portrait peut être fait d'après celui que l'artiste exécuta très peu de temps avant que j'eusse réussi à prendre le moule " [a masterpiece!] (p. 151).

(p) " On considering this statement of facts, I trust," etc.

" Ainsi, j'espère," etc. (p. 151).

gruities and false inferences, and is indeed fortunate to emerge at last with this *one clear and incontestable fact*: that the Bertrands possessed themselves of the front part of Burton's cast and brought it to England in collusion with Antommarchi. That is his one and only correct conclusion; and it is exactly balanced by the fallacy of the next he arrives at. As if Antommarchi's imposture was not sufficiently egregious, M. Masson proceeds to paint him blacker than he already was and to saddle him with the additional theft of Burton's *original mould*; and he devotes two pages of his article (pp. 155-6) to various idle speculations as to what eventually became of that mould. Now Burton's original mould, fashioned on the face of the dead Napoleon, was destroyed; *perforce* destroyed, as all 'waste-moulds' *must* be. There is no preserving such a mould; no choice but to destroy it: there is no other course open to the caster from nature.<sup>1</sup> How M. Masson could sit down to indite a thirty-page article on the death-mask of Napoleon, intended to instruct and illuminate his countrymen, without taking the trouble of making himself

<sup>1</sup> v. p. 119.

acquainted with the rudiments of the process of moulding and casting, is a thing that really baffles understanding. It is a slackness in a writer which cannot be too severely stigmatized : it is taking an unconscionable liberty with your reader.

Graves' Lecture in the original, we saw, was of capital documentary value, and that despite a few slips and misstatements : as dished up by M. Masson in French, it makes confusion worse confounded and is an empty and a useless thing. Smart meets the case perhaps :—

“ Vain are the documents of men ;  
And vain the flourish of the pen,  
That keeps the fool's conceit.”

And the fool here was a knave into the bargain : *traduttore traditore !*

One rather looked for some reference to the Mask in Prof. Sloane's great work ;<sup>1</sup> but he contented himself, in 1910, with a book-plate of the “ bust by Chaudet after the death-mask.” In June of that year appeared a short article by M. Montorgeuil in the *Revue Napoléonienne*, evoked by a renewal of the pretensions of the

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte.*

Antommarchi family. The writer pertinently asks how there can be *three* "original masks"—that possessed by Prince Victor Napoleon, that (erroneously) indicated by Lord Rosebery as being in England, and that alleged to be at Bogota—and in the light of M. Masson's article, the writer scouts the Italian surgeon's claims.

The following April, a "reply"—save the mark!—is printed by the same review, from a remote relation by marriage of Antommarchi, an officer of the name of Stella. *Nomen atque omen*: for, with the superb detachment of the stars that are

"Undistracted by the sights they see,"

the gallant scribe rises superior to the ascertained and published *facts* of St. Helena, which all who run may read, and, instead of answering the question, only succeeds in begging it most grossly. Napoleon, he submits, had enjoined upon Antommarchi that no Englishman (save Dr. Arnott) should touch him, alive or dead. The Italian *must* have obeyed the injunction. Hence Burton cannot have had a look in. *Ergo* Antommarchi moulded the mask! Which is simplicity itself; and we had it already from

Huard in 1865. But in forty-six years much ink had flowed round Napoleon's death-bed, and Huard's ignorance could not avail here : with Stella, it was something less ingenuous.

In 1911 also appeared the first volume (A-C) of M. Bénézit's Catalogue of Painters and Engravers, the most compendious and up-to-date in any language. After troubling to enter Dr. Arnott as an artist (' *École anglaise* '[sic]) on the score of his pathetic thumb-nail of Napoleon (whilst Crokot, too, is omitted) he unhesitatingly states that "to Antommarchi we owe the moulding of the mask of the Emperor." Writing two or three years after the publication of his compatriot, M. Masson's article, the least M. Bénézit could do was to query.

Lastly, in 1913, M. Cahuet<sup>1</sup> has two allusions, inspired by M. Masson. On page 52, this :—

"Antommarchi, likewise, had inside a little trunk covered with hide a moving memento of the dead, contained in a green box, to wit, the plaster mask of the Emperor's face, which the Corsican doctor, it would seem, had unduly possessed himself of, and to which the English

<sup>1</sup> *Après la Mort de l'Empereur.*

surgeon Dr. Burton was about to put forward certain claims. But Antommarchi took care for the moment to make no mention of the *moulage*, which he decided to turn to account only in 1837 [*sic*] some years after Dr. Burton's death."

The non-committal note of the above passage is much assisted by M. Cahuet's rhetorical choice of moods and tenses in the original. The other allusion is a mere clause, on page 290 :—

"Burton who, with Antommarchi, had moulded the imperial face."

Seeing the only object that left St. Helena was Burton's cast, the front part in the possession of Madame Bertrand, one may dismiss the "green box" as a little circumstantial colouring added *in extremis* to the Legend. Like Pandora's, that casket must have been empty, with hope abiding here betokened by the hue. Though Burton is only conceded by M. Cahuet a *share* and a *claim*, the purport of the two extracts is to discredit Antommarchi; and we may satisfactorily close our chronological review with the Legend in its apparent death-throes.

And yet, as was pointed out at the start, the Antommarchi Imposture dies hard : unlike the live plaster upon which it is founded, it cannot be 'killed' by exposure ! Paragraphs in the Press still appear and, no doubt, will continue to appear, in support of the pretension of some early reproduction of Burton's cast to be the 'only genuine original' moulded by Antommarchi. It was but a little while back that a London dealer was offering for sale, and for a paltry seventy guineas, "the most authentic portrait of Napoleon extant," being "a Death-Mask of Napoleon in plaster taken by his Doctor, Francesco Antommarchi, by order of General Bertrand, both of whom were present at the death-bed of Napoleon." (There is a *je ne sais quoi* about that insinuated and insinuating 'Francesco' which almost disarms suspicion : it seems to frank the whole affair !) And in the next sentence, that very circumstantial dealer unwittingly gave the "fake" away, for there were "traces of hair," quoth he, "encircling the brow, with more abundant locks over the centre of the forehead." After that, it was of small consequence to drag in an English Admiral and a Scottish Duke, and,

in a lyric strain, to inform prospective buyers that the cast bore "even a suggestion of a happy smile when regarded from certain points of view." Whatever the point of view, retouched plasters like this one may, *qua* presentments of Napoleon, be wholly *disregarded*.

We have now followed the Legend along its career of ninety-two years, and here and there have left the broad highway for the small side-turnings and the blind alleys. We have devoted some time to it ; and, were it not that in the ultimate judgment a grain of Truth outweighs a sackful of Romance, we might well be charged with the neglect of all balance. Let us exchange the Italian for *our* apter, far worthier 'Francesco.' Let us dismiss Antommarchi and his effluent Fiction, after our excursive, though by no means exhaustive, survey, and pass to Dr. Francis Burton and his more pithy Facts.



**PART II**  
**THE BURTON FACTS**



## II

### THE BURTON FACTS

**B**EFORE we endeavour to establish from Dr. Burton's own words exactly when and how he took the death-mask of Napoleon, let us glance at the technical process of moulding and casting from nature, for our present purpose confining ourselves to the human head, whether in life or death. And here let me gratefully acknowledge how much I owe to the instruction and the object-lesson given me by Messrs. Brucciani, of the Goswell Road, the oldest established and most accomplished cast-makers in the United Kingdom. In this Bonaparte connection, it is interesting to note that it was Messrs. Brucciani who took the death-mask of Napoleon III at Chislehurst in January, 1873, the original of which is in the possession of the Empress Eugénie.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the information obtained from Messrs. Brucciani, I have consulted, for the purpose of this section,

The process of moulding and casting a head has not materially changed in a hundred years; and two innovations only need be recorded: the plaster-of-Paris has been improved by hydration, and, following the example of M. Jaquet, the Louvre caster, the interposition of a sheet of thin muslin between the dead face and the first coat of plaster now almost universally obtains.

The steps are these: the subject, living or dead, is made to recline on his back at an angle of about thirty degrees. The hair, eyebrows, moustaches and beard are treated with soap lather, inspissated oil, or some other unguent in order to prevent the adhesion of the the following books and periodicals, of which the *Zoist* and the *Manuel* are the most valuable:—

*Masks, Heads and Faces*, by E. R. Emerson. 1892 (p. 5).

*Modelling in Clay and Wax* [with final chapter on Plaster work], by T. C. Simmonds. 1892 (p. 65, etc.).

*Modelling and Sculpture*, by Albert Toft. 1911 (p. 107, etc.).

*Manuel du Mouleur en Plâtre*, by Lebrun and Magnier. 1910 (pp. 11, 71, 92, etc.).

*Modelling*, by Prof. E. Lanteri. 1902 (Vol. III, p. 212, etc.).

*Etude phrénologique du Masque de Napoléon*, by A. Ombros. 1834.

*Portraits in Plaster*, by Lawrence Hutton. 1894 (p. xiii, etc.).

*The Zoist* for 1844 (p. 40, etc.).

*Gazette Médicale de Paris*, July 12, 1834.

*Edinburgh Courant*, November 12, 1836.

*Edinburgh Phrenological Journal*. 1836 (p. 418); 1842 (p. 283); 1844 (p. 246); 1845 (pp. 98, 142, etc.).

plaster—in Napoleon's case the head was shaved; in Keats' (life, face only) the hair was covered with a napkin—the skin of the face is moistened with sweet oil, and a strong silken thread is disposed along the ridge of the nose, the mesial line of the cranium and the nape of the neck so as eventually to cut the mould into halves. In some cases, where it is desired to remove the mould in three portions, an additional thread is laid sideways over the back of the head to cut off the occipital region by a vertical section immediately behind the ears. The orifices of the nose and the ears are blocked up and (for life masks) a thin quill is inserted in one nostril for breathing, or some other small aperture provided. The plaster having been properly prepared from calcined gypsum, the first coat of it (which should preferably be tinted a light blue or yellow) is carefully, though quickly, laid upon the nose, mouth, eyes, cheeks and forehead, so as to avoid distorting any feature; and it very soon sets. In the case of the living, it is applied straight on to the face, the natural spring of the resilient tissues forming the skin offering sufficient resistance to the superincumbent

weight ; but with the dead, that power having vanished, a sheet of muslin is interposed, partly to supply a mechanical resistance and partly to preclude the heat generated by the "live" plaster from blistering the epiderm. Even at best, however, in the hands of a skilled expert, the process of death-moulding is unsatisfactory ; for nothing can prevent the sinking of the eyes, the compression of the wings of the nose or the drawing in of the cheeks ; in fact, artifice pardonably comes to the rescue of art, and the moulder "makes up" slightly the face he is plastering.<sup>1</sup> The features being disposed of,

<sup>1</sup> This little artifice is not allowed for by Mr. Hutton in his apt, if superficial, estimate of the fidelity of a 'plaster-portrait': "The value of a plaster-cast as a portrait of the dead or living cannot for a moment be questioned. It must of necessity be absolutely true to Nature. It cannot flatter, it cannot caricature. It shows the subject as he was, not only as others saw him in the actual flesh, but as he saw himself. And in the case of the death-mask particularly, it shows the subject often as he permitted no one but himself to see himself [*sic*]. He does not pose ; he does not 'try to look pleasant.' In his death-mask he is seen as it were with his mask off !" (p. xiii.) Mr. Hutton's meaning is clear, even if his pronouns are obscure and his 'subject' and object have lost their common identity.

A plaster-cast is obviously true—the truest of *all* presentments—as far as the *framework* of the head and face is concerned and the shaping of the bony parts. The fidelity of the "soft parts," where resides all the *expression*, turns entirely upon the skill of the moulder. And we have seen that the greater his art, the more probable, too, his artifice.

the back of the head is pressed into a dish of plaster, and then the remaining portion, or intermediate belt, of the head is treated, extreme care being needed in the manipulation of the ears, which should be moulded in position and without in the least disturbing their convolutions. The second, third, fourth coats of plaster—this time pure white—are laid on in the same way till the mould is half an inch or so thick. Before it has set hard, in about half an hour or so, the silken thread is pulled and the mould comes apart in halves—in three pieces if two cords are used. These are at once

Howbeit, in the present case of Napoleon's mask, Burton, being an amateur, was incapable of "making-up"; and what his cast lacked in technical perfection may perhaps have been gained in naturalness. Handicapped though the death-moulder may be by the subsidence of the tissues and soft parts, there is just one advantage he enjoys over the life-moulder. There can be no contraction of muscles, voluntary or involuntary. The phrenologists of the 'thirties and 'forties were the very first to raise doubts as to the absolute 'scientific' trustworthiness of their casts taken from life. The apparent development of a phrenological 'organ' might vary with the frowning of the subject or the swelling of his temporal muscle. To take the very first 'faculty' in their sesquipedalian nomenclature, what with the 'astigmatic frown' and the particular and unknown amplitude of the frontal sinus, *Individuality* must often have been, like its next-door neighbour, decidedly 'eventual'!

brought together again,<sup>1</sup> soldered with live plaster and bound round with string, so as to constitute a hollow mould of the whole head. This is then steeped in water for some minutes (lest the dryness of the mould should absorb the moisture of the cast and leave air-bubbles in place), then drained off ; and while it is still wet the casting is begun by pouring in at the opening of the throat a sufficient quantity of plaster to line the inside of the mould. This should be turned round and round and rocked from side to side so as to ensure that every fold and convolution, every nook and cranny, shall receive its proper share of plaster ; after which process it is left awhile to set. Plaster is added from time to time till the cast attains the thickness of half or even one inch if desired—the “ original ” cast being usually thicker than the “ secondary ” ones. The whole is allowed to harden and dry for some hours ; and then by the careful use of an unground chisel and a mallet the mould is literally chipped away from the cast in flaky bits, growing smaller as the latter is approached, its emergence being sig-

<sup>1</sup> Usual practice ; but some moulders allow an interval for the drying of the pieces.



nalled by the tinted inner coat of the mould.<sup>1</sup> Let it be noted that owing to the swelling of the plaster at the instant of setting, a cast is a little bigger than the head it reproduces, sometimes as much as an inch on the total circumference : that swelling is in a measure neutralized nowadays by the use of an equal mixture of boiled and baked plaster.

That is the whole process of moulding and casting from nature. The "original," or primary, mould fashioned on the subject is bound, you see, to be destroyed by the chisel, whence the term *waste-mould* (French : *creux perdu*<sup>2</sup>) applied to it ; and thus only *one* "original," or "parent," cast can be taken from it. For the multiplication of casts, a "secondary," or *piece-mould* (French : *bon creux*), is made in three, four or five portions,

<sup>1</sup> There will be some tiny chips or scratches from the chisel on the cast, but these can be filled in afterwards with 'killed' plaster.

<sup>2</sup> *cf.*, Les moules pris sur nature ne pouvant être à plusieurs pièces, à chapette, à chape, sont toujours des moules à creux perdu, car on est ensuite obligé de les casser avec un ciseau après y avoir coulé le plâtre qui reproduit l'objet moulé " (Lebrun, p. 71). And : " Lorsqu'un creux perdu a très peu d'épaisseur, comme les moules pris sur nature, et spécialement les moules-masques, on les fait sécher au soleil ou sur un poêle " (*ibid.*, p. 92).

piece-meal, over the original cast,<sup>1</sup> and the edges of each portion trimmed with a sharp knife—which gives a very different 'line of cleavage' to the eye from that of the silk thread of the waste-mould. These pieces can be brought together and taken apart repeatedly, and may be utilized for the reproduction of casts *ad libitum*.

With this rapid insight into the expert procedure, let us now see exactly when and how Burton took the death-mask. Let him relate the whole episode in his own words, and in a much more precise and considered manner than in the private letter to his friend, printed by Graves. We shall then try to harmonize the two accounts and draw up a time-table covering the whole sequence of events.

On the 5th of September, 1821, Dr. Burton had taken proceedings before Mr. Birnie, at the Public Office, Bow Street, against Count and Countess Bertrand for the recovery of the "front part of a bust of General Buonaparte" detained illegally, as he contended, by them in collusion with Antommarchi. The full, and

<sup>1</sup> To avoid confusion, be it remembered that a 'waste-mould' is made in one and removed in pieces, and a 'piece-mould' both made and removed in pieces.

faulty, report in the *Courier* I append at foot.<sup>1</sup> We are not here concerned with the legal aspect of the case, with the ownership of the cast, or the prerogative of executors over a species of property undreamt of by the testator and non-existent at his death, or the 'copyright' in a *dead* face, or any other point which a casuistical attorney might well have urged in defence ; the law works in such wondrous way that it is

<sup>1</sup> " Yesterday a case of a very singular nature occurred at the Bow Street Office. The celebrated Count Bertrand, the companion of Buonaparte in his exile at St. Helena (and the executor under his will), appeared before R. Birnie, Esq., accompanied by Sir Robert Wilson, in consequence of a warrant having been issued to search the residence of the Count for a bust of his illustrious master, which it was alleged was the property of Dr. Burton, late a surgeon on the establishment at St. Helena [*sic*].

" The following are the circumstances of the case. Previous to the death of Buonaparte, he had given directions to his executors that his body should not be touched by any person ; after his death, however, Count Bertrand directed Dr. Antommarchi to take a bust of him ; but not being able to find a material which he thought would answer the purpose, he mentioned the circumstance to Dr. Burton, who promised that he would endeavour to procure some if possible. The Doctor, in pursuance of this promise, took a boat, manned, and picking up raw materials on the island, some distance from Longwood, he made a plaster which he conceived would answer the purpose. When he showed it to Dr. Antommarchi, he said it would not answer, and he refused to have anything to do with it ; in consequence of which, Dr. Burton proceeded to take a bust himself, with the sanction of Mesdames Bertrand and Montholon [*sic*], who were in the room at the time. An agreement was entered into that copies should be made

quite possible that Dr. Burton, though morally and ethically in the right, was quite legally and with all sacrosanct forms dismissed the court with a flea in his ear. The *authorshp* of the cast was not questioned at Bow Street—Antommarchi preferred no claim at the time—and the main interest for us in these proceedings, apart from their corroborative value, is that the misleading account of them given by various journals called forth this cardinal letter

of the bust, and that Drs. Antommarchi and Burton were to have such a copy. It was found, however, that the plaster was not sufficiently durable for the purpose, and it was proposed to send the original to England to have copies taken [*sic*]. When Dr. Burton, however, afterwards inquired for the bust, he was informed it was packed and nailed up, but a promise was made that upon its arrival in Europe, an application should be made to the family of Buonaparte for the copy required by Dr. Burton. On its arrival Dr. Burton wrote to the Count to have his promised copy, but was told, as before, that application would be made to the family of Buonaparte for it.

" Dr. Burton, upon this, applied to Bow Street for a search-warrant, in order to obtain the bust, as he conceived he had a right to it, he having furnished the materials and executed it. A warrant was issued, and Taunton and Salmon, two officers, went to the Count's residence in Leicester Square. When they arrived there, and had made known their errand, they were remonstrated with by Sir R. Wilson and the Count, who begged they would not act until they had an interview with Mr. Birnie, as there must be some mistake. The officers politely acceded to the request, and waived their right of search. Count Bertrand had, it seems, offered a pecuniary compensation to Dr. Burton for his trouble, but that was rather indignantly refused by the Doctor, who persisted in the

from Dr. Burton. Written calmly and deliberately for publication, at a time when the St. Helena incidents and the tort done him there and in London were freshly rankling in his mind, giving the *official* account, as it were, of his performance to the whole world, and challenging overtly all possible criticism, contestation, reply or refutation, this letter has told the importance for us of any other item in the *dossier*, not excepting Graves' Lecture :

assertion of his right to the bust, as his own property, and made application for the search-warrant.

" Count Bertrand, in answer to the case stated by Dr. Burton, said the bust was the property of the family of the deceased, to whom he was executor, and he thought he would not be authorized in giving it up. If, however, the law of this country ordained it otherwise, he must submit ; but he should protest earnestly against it.

" The worthy Magistrate, having sworn the Count Bertrand to the fact that he was executor under the will of Buonaparte, observed that it was a case out of his jurisdiction altogether, and if Dr. Burton chose to persist in his claim, he must seek a remedy before another tribunal.

" The case was dismissed, and the warrant was cancelled.

" Sir R. Wilson begged to observe that he had never witnessed a more flagrant piece of injustice practised upon any individual than this, and it was the more disgraceful that it should be practised upon a foreigner whom the laws ought peculiarly to protect. He hoped Mr. Birnie would approve of the conduct of the officers in waiving the right of search.

" Mr. Birnie said he thought they had acted quite correctly.

" The parties then left the Office."

(*The Courier*, September 6, 1821.)

it is *the* document, in a word ; and open as it was for any casual researcher to peruse at the British Museum, it is strange it should have eluded the notice of all previous writers who have mentioned the mask. Seeing its moment, I raise or annotate certain points at foot. It was thus printed by the *Courier* on September 10, 1821 :—<sup>1</sup>

“ THE BUST OF BUONAPARTE.

“ To the Editor of the *Courier*.

“ SIR,—As the facts connected with an occurrence which took place at Bow Street on the 5th are incorrectly stated in your paper of the 6th, and in the *Times* of the 7th, respecting an attempt made to recover for me the front part of a bust<sup>2</sup> of the late General Buonaparte taken by me after his death at St. Helena, and which is now forcibly detained by Count and Countess Bertrand, I trust you will do me the justice to insert the following statement, which I have pledged myself to give, and which

<sup>1</sup> On September 8 the *Courier* and the *Morning Post* had printed a short note from Burton, requesting readers to withhold judgment pending his long letter.

<sup>2</sup> As before, Burton uses “bust” as equivalent to “cast,” and “model” to “mould.”

I can prove by the most respectable evidence.<sup>1</sup>

“ Both before and after the death of General Buonaparte, I mentioned to the Governor and several of his staff that I had been in the habit of taking casts in plaster-of-Paris, and that I was very anxious to take a bust of General Buonaparte; which proposal met with Sir Hudson Lowe’s approbation, who requested me to be very careful in the execution of it, as he thought it would be a matter of much interest. I accordingly, the morning after General Buonaparte’s decease, proceeded to Longwood. On my arrival there, Dr. Antommarchi informed me that he intended taking a cast: I asked his permission to be present, and also to take one myself, to which he agreed. Dr. Antommarchi, however, on trial of the material sent to him,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The use of the indicative mood suggests he had evidence at hand and deponents ready to come forward at once. If so, it can only designate those English officers and civilians, present at Longwood during the moulding and casting, who had already returned to England. It would include Crokat, Nicol, Ward, Croad and Rubidge: it might anticipate Lowe and Reade who were on the eve of reaching London; and it would exclude Gorrequer, Emmett, Wortham, Drs. Arnott and Rutledge, Payne, Darling and Ibbetson, still at St. Helena.

<sup>2</sup> First thing on the morning of the 6th, in answer to Madame Bertrand’s “ repeated requests ” (v. p. 19).

said it could not succeed ; upon which I returned to Jamestown and found that there was no plaster to be had in the shops, but learned that the crude material (sulphate of lime)<sup>1</sup> was to be found scattered about in different parts of the Island. The Admiral was then applied to, who allowed his boats to proceed in search of it, Mr. Payne, ornamental house-painter, employed at Longwood, having offered his services in preparing the plaster. As soon as it was ready, I had it conveyed to Dr. Antommarchi under the feeling that the friends of the deceased ought to have the first trial ; he, however, on seeing the plaster, said it could not succeed, and positively refused even to attempt it. This occurred in the presence of Madame Bertrand, several British officers,<sup>2</sup> Mr. Payne, Mr. Rubidge<sup>3</sup> and many of the household. On seeing Dr. Antommarchi positively refuse to attempt the cast, Madame Bertrand not only gave me permission, but

<sup>1</sup> Strictly, sulphate of calcium,  $\text{CaSO}_4$  ; lime itself being  $\text{CaO}$ .

<sup>2</sup> Crockat, Croad, Ward, Emmett, Gorrequer ; possibly Nicol, Reade and Harrison ; also Dr. Rutledge and presumably Dr. Arnott.

<sup>3</sup> The portrait-painter.



urged me even to attempt it.<sup>1</sup> With little difficulty I succeeded in forming the mould,<sup>2</sup> but at so late an hour that a second could not be taken. Dr. Antommarchi, after the only difficulty had been surmounted,<sup>3</sup> thought proper to assist.<sup>4</sup> Next morning, the bust was taken from the mould, but finding the plaster very bad, I was most reluctantly obliged to sacrifice the mould to preserve the bust perfect.<sup>5</sup> Here then lay a difficulty; for although the person employed by the friends of the deceased could not execute the business, I thought it a neces-

<sup>1</sup> This might seem a misuse of "cast" for "mould," the confusion which Burton is never guilty of. He is here, of course, looking—and with something of the detachment of the mere spectator—at the resultant to be achieved by Antommarchi, *the finished cast*, of which the mould is the preliminary step. But when, with the next sentence, he brings himself into action, he is careful to particularize the stages.

<sup>2</sup> Compare this with Burton's letter to Madame Bertrand given by Graves: "... the bust of Napoleon, which, *with such infinite pains*, I succeeded in forming." As 'bust' means 'cast,' we gather that Burton found it more difficult to take the cast than to fashion the mould—the reverse of what usually obtains.

<sup>3</sup> Let us rather say, "the *chief* difficulty," the ears.

<sup>4</sup> We can only conjecture what precise degree of "assistance" Antommarchi tendered—perhaps he pulled the thread? The motive of such eleventh-hour intervention on the part of the jealous and cunning Italian is plain: on that slender foundation was he about to erect his whole imposture. It is the Legend in embryo.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 133.

sary compliment that the friends should have one of the best busts that I could execute ; and under this impression I have ever acted. I represented to them, through Dr. Antommarchi, the great danger of attempting to take a second mould from the bust,<sup>1</sup> owing to the badness of the plaster ; but to obviate the difficulty, proposed that it should not be attempted until our arrival in England, which was agreed to, and Dr. Antommarchi proposed that it should be done at the Sablonière Hotel,<sup>2</sup> London, to which house he intended going.

" I returned next day to the room in which the bust had been left for the purpose of drying, and there learnt that the face part<sup>3</sup> of it had

<sup>1</sup> i.e. A secondary or piece-mould from the original cast, by means of which to multiply casts.

<sup>2</sup> A foreign hotel kept by one Carlo Pagliano at the corner of Leicester Square and Green Street, the old house of Hogarth and the present Tenison's School. In the 'sixties, the days of Baron Grant, it took on the additional name of '*de Provence*,' and was moved to the other corner on the same side of the Square. In the 'nineties the first name was dropped, and it still flourishes as *Hotel Provence*. As we have seen, Antommarchi changed his mind and put up with the Bertrands at Brunet's Hotel just a few doors off, on the site of the present Alhambra pit entrance.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 134. The expression, which is Burton's usual one, is rather awkward and as we saw, misled Dr. Graves. Antommarchi's was worse : he omitted the " part " and made it " face " *tout court* : "*Je moulai la figure*." He was taken to task in 1834 for the inaccuracy.

been carried away and packed up by order of Madame Bertrand. I called at her house,<sup>1</sup> and found she had done so ; but she assured me upon her honour, in presence of her husband, of Major Emmett<sup>2</sup> and of Dr. Antommarchi, that I should have a cast from it as soon as we arrived where plaster could be procured. Having been thus cajoled and ungratefully treated, I was anxious to have Madame Bertrand's promise in writing. I accordingly wrote two notes to her, *but she avoided sending me a written answer to either of them*. She, however, authorized the Orderly Officer (Lieutenant Croad,<sup>3</sup> 66th Regiment) to write to me, repeating her assurance that I should have a cast as soon as any could be taken. Not satisfied, I then wrote her husband, stating that I would consent to let him retain even the original bust provided he allowed me to take a copy from it.<sup>4</sup> His answer opened

<sup>1</sup> The Bertrands, who had lived "in a hovel" at Hutt's Gate until October, 1816, were now decently housed at Longwood within call of Napoleon.

<sup>2</sup> Of the Royal Engineers, employed on the "New House" at Longwood.

<sup>3</sup> Ensign Croad had deputized the Orderly Officers Nicholls, Lutyens and Crokot. On the latter's departure for England with Lowe's despatches announcing the death, Croad succeeded him in the post, now quite perfunctory.

<sup>4</sup> i.e. a secondary piece-mould when they reached London.

my eyes completely, as he disclaimed my right to the bust, on the principle that I had merely assisted Dr. Antommarchi;<sup>1</sup> expressed his obligations, and said that he would request the Emperor's Family to send me the handsomest copy that could be executed. On my arrival in England I wrote a note to him, requesting the fulfilment of Madame Bertrand's promise, to which (contrary to what is stated in your paper and in the *Times*) *he had not the politeness to return an answer*, for which I waited three weeks, under the idea that he would on reflection fulfil his wife's promise.

" Finding myself deceived, and holding myself bound to the Governor, the Admiral and

Burton, till now, had never doubted but that he would retain his original cast.

<sup>1</sup> We saw at the outset the public send-off of the Antommarchi Legend: this marks its private starting-point. Bertrand and the Italian had obviously wasted no time over the incubation!

The "principle" laid down by Bertrand was merely a bluff to screen his real *raison d'état*. He had evidently determined that, come what might, no Englishman should possess such an inestimable, unique and original memento of the Emperor as a death-mask: such a relic as that, he deemed, no matter who gave it existence, must remain in *his* hands, to be 'published,' if need were, in France at a more toward season, and by his sole authority. There is much to be said for the Grand-Marshal's conviction. Howbeit, it does not excuse his wife's breach of faith, warrant Antommarchi's imposture, or atone for the injustice done to Dr. Burton.

some others, to let them have busts as soon as I could execute them, and having experienced such want of justice and even politeness from Count and Countess Bertrand, I was at length reluctantly obliged to have recourse to legal means, and was advised to apply at Bow Street.<sup>1</sup>

"Mr. Birnie, on hearing both sides, declined acting any further in the business, on the principle that it involved a question of Executorship. Now, is it possible to look upon the bust as the property of the friends of the deceased and not that of the person who procured the material and executed the work, unemployed by them,<sup>2</sup> and without meeting the slightest

<sup>1</sup> This does not tally with Graves' statement that Burton "immediately applied to the Revenue Office and the Lord Mayor." Burton reached London on Thursday, August 9th, the bearer of despatches from Lowe, and had an interview with Goulburn and Bathurst (*C.O. Records*, 247, vol. 32, Letter B). He would write to Bertrand, say, on the 10th. 'Three weeks' brings us to September 1st, a Saturday. On the Monday he would see an attorney, and apply at Bow Street for the search-warrant. On the Tuesday it would be executed. And on the Wednesday, 5th, came the case into Court. There seems no time for the Lord Mayor.

<sup>2</sup> This is a useful point Burton makes. In a possible polemic arising from this letter, Madame Bertrand, who, in this matter of the mask, did not stick at a lie, might well have contended that she 'employed' Burton to make it. In fact, one cannot help looking upon the "pecuniary compensation" which, it appeared at Bow Street, Bertrand had offered

hindrance on their part—I leave the world to decide.

“With respect to the interference of Sir Robert Wilson, I shall only remark that the report has omitted that part of his speech in which he thought proper to exonerate me, as having acted under advice. Had his language been even more violent than it was, the rank which he holds (a General Officer) would render it a breach of duty in me to take any notice of it; of which Sir Robert must have been fully aware.<sup>1</sup>

“I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

“FRANCIS BURTON, M.D.,

“*Surgeon, 66th Regt.*”

Burton, and the latter had indignantly rejected, as less an indemnification for his trouble, or salve for his wounded pride, or even, if you like, so much hush-money, than a fee, to constitute him, retroactively, a paid *employé*.

<sup>1</sup> It so fell out that these proceedings coincided with one of the tempestuous episodes of Sir Robert Wilson's picturesque career—which still awaits its narrator—and within a week of this he was cashiered for his conduct at Queen Caroline's funeral. And if Burton felt a little *Schadenfreude* thereat, who shall blame him?

At this time, and ever since 1815, Sir Robert—that blend of Bayard and Don Quixote—was atoning for the slanders he had heaped upon Bonaparte in his *History of the British Expedition to Egypt* (1801), by befriending all the followers and partisans of the fallen Emperor, wherever he ran across them. His relations with Piontkowski, and with the still humbler Santini, I have dwelt upon in *A Polish Exile with Napoleon*.



FRANCIS BURTON, M.D.  
*From a miniature in the possession of his granddaughter, Mrs. Agg*





The first thing to strike one in the above document is that Dr. Burton was an amateur, and, what is more, an amateur labouring under difficulties. He tells us he had been "in the habit of taking casts in plaster-of-Paris," doubtless for surgical purposes. But it is one thing to take a cast of a deformed foot or an arthritic joint and quite another to fashion a death-mask. The former is done, if only once by way of experiment, by every student that walks the hospitals : it is of a piece with the setting of a fractured limb in plaster. But the cast of a whole head, especially after death, is a very different operation and it demands the skilled expert. Dr. Burton, I submit, *had never taken a death-mask before*, else how could he have expected to preserve the waste-mould ; the compulsory destruction of which he actually—almost disingenuously—ascribes to the ' badness of the plaster ' ? " Reluctant " though he may have been, he had no choice in the matter. Again, he made what, in the light of events, proved the deplorable mistake of not joining the pieces of his waste-mould together, and therefore casting the head, not as a whole, but in two parts—a " front part " and a " back

part." Had the cast been made in one bulky whole, it *might* never have been annexed by Madame Bertrand : if there could be a shadow of excuse for her step, begotten of her feminine logic, it was that, seeing Antommarchi had "assisted" Burton, it was only fair in principle and practice that the English surgeon should 'go shares' in the finished article—and being no phrenologist, she seized upon the "face part" as the more humanly interesting of the two.

Thirdly, Burton, anxious though he was to gauge of the success of his undertaking, which only the *cast* could fully show, let an unconscionable time elapse—a whole night and over—between the moulding and the casting: the only valid reason one can assign is the lack of sufficient plaster for the latter operation. Lastly, he made a sad bungle of the ears, especially the right ; there was no attempt at moulding them. On the cast you can make out the lobe and the tragus, and perhaps the anti-tragus, but the main cartilage of the ear, the beautiful curves of the helix and anti-helix, is inextricably crushed into the concha.

These are the errors manifest, or the depar-

tures from the normal. What other amateurish touches Burton may or may not have indulged in we can only surmise : and it is only of mere academic interest to inquire whether he used one thread or two, a chisel or a knife, whether he chipped off the mould in large pieces in the hope of being able to put them together again, whether he oiled the face or in any way protected it, and what he did precisely so to distort the ears.

Passing to things a little less conjectural, let us draw up a tentative time-table covering Dr. Burton's whole performance. It presents some difficulty, and depends upon the way in which we harmonize his 'official' account with his private letter given by Graves, and upon what amount of credence we extend to his assertion in the latter that "forty hours elapsed after the death before the plaster was ready."

If we accept that statement and interpret it as meaning that there was no plaster at all suitable before that hour, and that the moulding itself could only be attempted at 10 a.m. on the 7th of May, then the time-table works out as follows :—

**SATURDAY, MAY 5<sup>th</sup>.**

P.m., afternoon. Napoleon dying. Lowe and Montchenu at the 'New House.' Dr. Burton moots the question of a death-mask to Lowe.

5.49. Death of Napoleon.

6 p.m. (*ca.*). Drs. Shortt and Mitchell and Cpt. Crokot verify death.

Evening. Madame Bertrand requests Crokot to procure plaster.

Night. Dr. Arnott watches the body ; Cpt. Crokot at hand.

**SUNDAY, MAY 6<sup>th</sup>.**

A.m., dawn, 6. (?) Arnott and Crokot make their sketches.

7-7.30. Visit of Lowe, Reade, Harrison, Gorrequer ; Gen. Coffin ; Adml. Lambert, Vidal, Cpts. Brown, Marryat and Hendry ; Montchenu and de Gors ; Greentree, Brooke ; and Dr. Burton.—Marryat takes his sketch.—Plaster submitted to Madam Bertrand and Antommarchi. The latter declares it unsuitable.

- 8 (*ca.*). Burton returns to Jamestown and searches the shops.
- 9 a.m. (*ca.*). The Admiral is applied to and sends boats out.
- 9-midnight (?). Search for plaster, under Burton's guidance.
- 10-12. Various E.I.C. officials, officers and civilians defile past the body. Ibbetson makes his sketch.
- 2-3.30 p.m. *Post-mortem*; Burton has returned and is present.
- 4 (*ca.*). Antommarchi shaves the head and tends the body. Dr. Rutledge relieves Dr. Arnott.
- 4-10 (?). Burton renews his search for plaster "by torchlight."
- 5.30-6. Napoleon is dressed in uniform by Marchand and moved to the other room (5.45, Antommarchi).
6. 'The crowd' is admitted. Crokat regulates it. Ensign Ward and Lt. Welsh take their sketches.
- Night. Dr. Rutledge watches the body; Dr. Arnott guards the heart and stomach (*v. Times*, January 6, 1844).

**MONDAY, MAY 7th.**

Napoleon lies in state all day ; and is beheld  
by the bulk of the inhabitants.

8-10 a.m. (*ca.*). Rubidge paints the portrait.

10 [40 hours after death]. Plaster arrives.

Dr. Burton moulds the head. The mould,  
in two pieces, is laid aside for the day and  
the night.

7.30 p.m. Napoleon is encoffined by Darling,  
Levy, Millington and others in the pres-  
ence of Dr. Rutledge. The latter is  
relieved of his duty and dines with  
Bertrand and Montholon. Cpt. Crokat  
proceeds to the town and embarks on  
the *Heron* at 11.45 p.m. with the de-  
spatches.

**TUESDAY, MAY 8th.**

8-10 (?) a.m. Dr. Burton takes the cast from  
his mould and lays it aside to dry all day.

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 9th.**

8 (*ca.*) a.m. Burton returns and finds his  
cast (front part) abstracted.

Noon. Funeral of Napoleon.

The above is the scheme, on the "forty hours after death" basis. But in the light of Dr. Burton's *Courier* document there are several capital, if not irrefragable, objections to that table :—

(1) Burton is very careful to mark the flight of time, and thrice does he note the passing of the days. He proceeds to Longwood, he tells us, "the morning after General Bonaparte's decease," i.e. on the 6th at 7 a.m. ; the "next morning" he takes the cast from the mould ; he returns "next day" to the chamber and finds his cast gone. In the face of this, can it be supposed that he would omit to record so important a lapse as that of the night of the 6th-7th, between his visit to the dead and his moulding ? He plainly lets you infer that both took place on the same day, that is, the 6th.

(2) "With little difficulty I succeeded in forming the mould, but at so late an hour that a second could not be taken."

The expression "so late an hour," taken in juxtaposition with the one "next morning" that follows, can only mean "so late in the day that night was falling." Candles, and not very many at that, being the chief illuminant granted

"General Buonaparte" by the British Government, and the cross-shadows cast by a number of them being a decided drawback to plastic work, Burton would not attempt to make a second waste-mould after dark. The phrase *cannot* signify "so long after death that decomposition was rapidly setting in." Burton was practised in his own tongue and especially in its medical jargon, and if he had *meant* that he would have *said* it. Moreover, though, in that climate, the lapse of a whole night would make a world of difference in the appearance of the dead, a mere half-hour or hour, within that time of the dissolution, would not preclude the taking of another waste-mould

"Before decay's effacing fingers  
Have swept the lines where Beauty lingers."

"So late an hour," I submit, refers to night-fall; and *perforce* on the 6th. For if you place it on the 7th, then you get the *reductio ad absurdum* that Burton took from 10 a.m. till 6 p.m. to fashion his mould: eight hours for an hour's job. Amateur though he was, the supposition is too preposterous to consider seriously.

(3) If Burton made his mould only on the 7th, when "plaster arrived" in sufficient



quantity and of suitable quality for all his requirements, then how comes it that he should have postponed the casting for some twenty-four hours, till "next morning," i.e. on the 8th? We have seen it was a departure from the normal; but, apart from that, he was far too eager to judge of his accomplishment to tolerate any delay that was not absolutely imposed upon him by the stress of circumstances, that is, by the lack of casting-plaster.

(4) In his letter to Madame Bertrand, printed by Graves, Dr. Burton writes: "As well, Madame, might the portrait be taken from the artist who executed it a little before I succeeded in the cast." When your whole period is covered by a couple of days, "a little before" means an hour or two. If the mould was taken on the 7th, and the cast consequently on the 8th, then what on earth was Rubidge doing with his paints and his brushes in the early morning of that second day, *twelve hours after Napoleon was encoffined*? His portrait of the uniformed Emperor was taken on the morning of the 7th.

(5) Graves tells us that Burton "made terms" with Madame Bertrand "before he commenced the execution of the mould." Thrice

in the ten lines of that passage (and ten times altogether) Graves employs the word "mould." The first and third times (and five other times later) it is the word *cast* that the sense and the facts of the case require. This is the second instance; and here, too, I submit, the word should be *cast*. For when did Burton make those "terms" which concerned solely the disposal of the several casts that he, in his inexperience, fondly thought to take from his one and only waste-mould? Before the *moulding*? Surely not.

Dr. Burton was an emotional and imaginative man, with an Irishman's strength of feeling. Himself testifies to the awful impression indelibly made upon him by the sight of the dead Conqueror. *He moulded Napoleon's head in fear and trembling*; firstly, because it was *Napoleon*; secondly, because (the inference is warranted) he had never fashioned a death-mask before. None, in that assistance, save perhaps Antommarchi, can have been more surprised by his success than the surgeon himself. Now a man does not moot terms and bandy conditions in trepidation, a prey to the gravest doubts as to the upshot of his projected attempt, when on the

verge of a very dubious experiment authoritatively foredoomed to failure by a knowledgeable *confrère* and *soi-disant* expert. That species of arrogance, that bird-in-the-bush covenant, savour of Antommarchi far more than of Burton. *But*, when the experiment, derided by the cynic at his elbow, has succeeded beyond expectation, when the forlorn hope has returned with flying colours from the breach, when, in a word, Burton had something tangible to go upon, a bird-in-the-hand to strike a bargain with, *then* he made terms with Madame Bertrand, and he must have held some such parley as this : " I have managed to make a satisfactory mould ; now I will take several casts (busts, he would say) from it ; you shall have one, Count Montholon shall have one, Antommarchi shall have one ; but I will retain myself the first cast I take." Dr. Burton, methinks, made those terms before he began the *casting*.<sup>1</sup> Now, on that occasion there was present, amongst others, Dr. Rutledge. If the casting was on the 8th, then, as with Rubidge just now, what was Rutledge

<sup>1</sup> " An agreement was entered into that copies should be made of the bust," etc. (*Bow Street Proceedings*). But this may refer to the subsequent " Sablonière Hotel proposal."

doing in the chamber the morning after he had been relieved of his responsible and disagreeable trust ? Once again the casting and the " terms " were on the 7th and the moulding consequently on the 6th.

(6) A small point. Napoleon was dressed in uniform by Marchand at about 5.30 p.m. on the 6th. It is natural to suppose the mould was fashioned on the head before the body had been stiffly and elaborately invested.

So, then, our tentative time-table will not do. The only way out, it seems, is to *double everything*. There were two days, the 6th and 7th ; two operations, the moulding and the casting ; two lots of plaster, a little poor stuff from the town for the former job and a plenty of newly-found gypsum for the latter ; two offers to Antommarchi to attempt the two several tasks, and two refusals on his part—and alas, as we know, there were two pieces to the cast. The first lot of plaster, just enough and adequate for the moulding, must have been found by Burton some time in the forenoon of the 6th, either " with the help of the Admiral's boat," or, more likely, in the town, on a second and

more thorough search. Do you suppose that there was no plaster at all to be discovered in Jamestown during the twenty hours that followed the death? There were layers of gypsum worked in the Island, one just behind Longwood, in Prosperous Valley; it was found in several varieties;<sup>1</sup> and it was utilized by the builders and whitewashers and decorators of the place; and Payne, Darling, Gordon, Boorman and others were well versed in the use and preparation of it. Is it conceivable that they should have run out of it just on May 6th, 1821, every handful of it, even though it might have been a little spoilt or 'killed' by the damp? As it is, they sent a small quantity to Madame Bertrand in the morning and Antommarchi pronounced it

<sup>1</sup> "A good deal of plaster of Paris has been found in Prosperous Valley. It is dug from the rock not more than a foot below the surface, and is very easily reduced to powder. It makes good plaster and also a beautiful whitewash for walls." (E. L. Jackson, p. 139.)

"The union of lime with sulphuric acid is called sulphate of lime, or gypsum; a substance which is found in St. Helena in several varieties." (*Some Observations on the Minerals and Soil of St. Helena*, by Dr. [James] Arnott, M.D. [Medical Superintendent of the H.E.I.C.]. [*Proceedings of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of St. Helena*, 1828, p. 77, n.].)

At the Show of the above Society in 1827, a gratuity of £1 10s. was adjudged to Serjeant Murray for specimens of plaster of Paris. (*Ibid.*, p. 99.)

unsuitable, as he pronounced the *second* lot, too, that came later—thus did the boaster cover his retreat !

When Burton says “ he found no plaster in the shops,” he is doubtless thinking of his general requisition, in the early morning of the 6th, for a supply large enough to make the mould *and* the several casts which he then contemplated. To Burton, while still merely thinking and speaking of the death-mask, the end in view, the object to be achieved, is of course, the finished *cast* ; the moulding being but the preliminary step thereto. It is only when he is actually setting to work that the two things assume their proper perspective as two separate independent operations and that he performs them one at a time, with a night's interval and with two different lots of plaster.

The time-table we must adopt, therefore, is the following, in which the moulding intervenes on the afternoon of the 6th, between the tending of the body by Antommarchi and the dressing of it by Marchand :—

[ENTRIES BEYOND DISPUTE NOT REPEATED.]

SUNDAY, MAY 6<sup>th</sup>.

9-12 (?) a.m. Burton and Ward search for plaster.

4 (?) p.m. Plaster prepared and brought up by Payne.

4.30-5.30. *Burton makes the mould* in the presence of Madame Bertrand, Cpt. Crokat, Antommarchi, Dr. Rutledge, Ward, Croad, Rubidge, (?) Darling, Payne, and members of the Household.

7.30 (?) p.m. Burton renews his search for more plaster *for casting*.

#### MONDAY, MAY 7<sup>th</sup>.

10 a.m. Plaster arrives. Burton takes his one and only cast. It remains in the room to dry all day and all night.

#### TUESDAY, MAY 8<sup>th</sup>.

8 (*ca.*) a.m. Burton returns and finds his cast gone.

That is the revised draft. By it, and for it, we must sacrifice two things, two seeming pillars of *uberrima fides*: Burton's "forty hours after death"; Marchand's "second day after the death."<sup>1</sup> As to the first, the surgeon, in his private letter, was timing the arrival of the plaster—it must have been the *second* lot used

<sup>1</sup> Masson.

for the casting. As for Marchand, he kept no diary—he tells us why<sup>1</sup>—no scrupulous record of time and place ; and when in 1836 he set down a few particulars of Napoleon's last days, he did so purely from memory. That the latter was not beyond reproach is shown by his mistiming so important an event as the death—6.30 instead of 5.49, nearly three-quarters of an hour out ;<sup>2</sup> and he synchronizes this with the setting of the sun :

“The sun that on thy tossing pain  
Did with such cold derision shine.”

His “second day after death” may refer to the moulding or to the casting ; in either case it is vague and allows considerable latitude.<sup>3</sup>

When dealing with the Antommarchi Legend, though we noted many a repetition of his concocted story, with more or less embellishment, by European writers from his day to our own,

<sup>1</sup> See *Précis des Guerres de César, par Napoléon*, 1836, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> There is a vast choice for the moulding-time in the writers we have noted, and to try to harmonize *them*, instead of just Burton himself, were indeed *peins perdus* ! Dayot places it at “a few instants after death” (*also* on the 6th !); Firmin-Didot on the death-day ; Sainsbury on the 6th (12–24 hours after death) ; Antommarchi about 18 hours after ; Hutton, 20 hours ; Marchand, 36–48 hours ; Masson, 40 hours ; Montorgeuil, 48 hours, and so forth.



and many a backing given to his imposture in ignorance but never in bad faith, *not a single word did we find, set down at St. Helena itself*, or proceeding from some actor in that episode of the Mask, which in any way supported the Italian's pretension. There *could* be nothing, of course.

Here again Dr. Burton has the advantage ; and at least two deponents, both at Longwood on May 6th and 7th, confirm his account : the one is Sir Hudson Lowe himself, and the other is Burton's friend, Ensign Ward. There are altogether three<sup>1</sup> mentions of the mask by English officers, but one of these is a mere passing reference in a private letter. Major Gorrequer, Lowe's A.D.C., writing to Sir George Bingham, who some years before had been second in command of the troops drafted to St. Helena for the Detention, has this allusion :—

“ Some attempts at likeness were made before and after he was dressed out ; I have not seen any, however, really like. A cast of plaster of Paris was also taken of him and a bust made

<sup>1</sup> Four, with Capt. Brown's allusion (*v.* p. 61). But he only deposed to an attempt.

from it, which is now in the possession of Madame Bertrand."<sup>1</sup>

No name is mentioned save that of the Countess ; but the very manner in which this is introduced lends colour illatively to Burton's grievance, and thereby to his claim.

Of far greater moment is the Governor's account ; and that passage in the *Lowe Papers*—never printed before in its entirety, and not so much as alluded to by Forsyth—which deals with the question of the mask, constitutes the one and only *official* document in the case, in the strict sense of the term. It figures in Lowe's great despatch to Lord Bathurst of June 13, 1821, which, with others, was confided to the care of Dr. Burton himself, then sailing for England in the *Abundance* store-ship : in fact it served to introduce the surgeon to the Secretary of State. It runs as follows :—

" Dr. Burton, to whom I have entrusted those [packages] now sent (but who is unacquainted

<sup>1</sup> *Cornhill Magazine*, February, 1901. The letter is dated May 6th ; but this passage, of course, was written at the very earliest on the 8th. The Major's approximation in a private letter is in striking contrast to his excessive precision in official ones, for some amusing instances of which see the author's article, " Gorrequer at St. Helena," in *History* for July, 1912.

with the nature of their contents<sup>1</sup>), was one of the medical gentlemen who signed the Dissection Report. He can, I believe, give your Lordship the fullest information on every matter. Your Lordship will find Dr. Burton's name more particularly mentioned in Sir Thomas Reade's letter to me regarding the dissection; but I have had no conversation with him on the subject, nor is he at all aware I have made any particular communication upon it. Dr. Burton has not been very well used by the Count and Countess Bertrand. They wished to have a cast of General Bonaparte's head in plaster of Paris. Professor Antommarchi undertook to have it done, but could not succeed. Dr. Burton, by a happy combination of skill and patience, succeeded, though with very indifferent material, in obtaining an almost perfect cast. The Bertrands have kept the face;<sup>2</sup> Dr. Burton has preserved the back of the skull, or craniological part. There was a contest on [*sic*] correspondence between them on the occasion, and I have only to approve Dr. Burton's delicacy in seeing

<sup>1</sup> This has special reference to the package containing the private papers and diaries of Las Cases, seized by the Governor in 1816.

<sup>2</sup> Better, "face-part," Burton's expression.

it was a subject upon which he could not with propriety refer to me for a decision. Dr. Burton had joined the 66th a very short time since ; and, if medical skill could have been of any real use in General Bonaparte's complaint, Dr. Burton appears capable to have given great aid."<sup>1</sup>

There could not be a more exact, concise and official confirmation of Dr. Burton's story ; Antommarchi tried and failed ; Burton succeeded, and was dispossessed of his work by the Bertrands ; and there was the grievance in being. Antommarchi's claim was still *in petto* at this date. Burton could only have vaguely inferred it from Bertrand's reply to his remonstrances of some three weeks before. We, too, may approve—even if we regret—Burton's "delicacy." Sir Hudson had, in all conscience, enough Gordian knots to cope with already without being pressed for a judgment, which, haply, might have been that of Solomon, adapted !

Ensign Ward's testimony though interesting is not contemporary, and not so accurate ; and it is transmitted, not by his own pen but his

<sup>1</sup> Add. MSS., 20,140, f. 115.

wife's. In the 'sixties there was published a *brochure* with the title of *Facts connected with the Last Hours of Napoleon*. It has become extremely rare and is not found at the British Museum.<sup>1</sup> The only copy known to me is in the collection of Alfred Brewis, Esq., of Newcastle-on-Tyne, who has kindly placed it at my disposal. It was written by Mrs. Harriet Ward, daughter of Col. Tidy of the 24th, stationed at St. Helena in the 'forties, and wife of the young ensign of the 66th who was Dr. Burton's friend in 1821. Mrs. Ward attained a certain note half-way through the last century as a novelist and published some dozen works between the years 1848 and 1860, *Helen Charteris* achieving the widest popularity. Her style was rather romantic and flamboyant, and we may detect even in the following extract a straining after effect which tends to impair its verisimilitude :—

“ On the night of the 5th May, 1821, a young Ensign of the 66th was wending his solitary way along a path leading from the plain of Deadwood to his barracks, situated on a patch of tableland called Francis Plain. . . . The day after

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in part by Lady Burton in the *Life of her Husband*, 1893, Vol. I, f. 4.

Napoleon's decease, the young officer I have alluded to, instigated by emotions which drew vast numbers to Longwood House, found himself within the very death-chamber of Napoleon. After the first thrill of awe had subsided, he sat down and on the fly-leaf torn from a book, and given him by General Bertrand, he took a rapid but faithful sketch of the deceased Emperor.<sup>1</sup> Earlier in the day, the officer had accompanied his friend Dr. Burton, of the 66th Regiment, through certain paths in the Island, in order to collect material for making a composition resembling plaster-of-Paris, for the purpose of taking a cast with as little delay as possible after death. Dr. Burton having prepared the composition, set to work and completed the task satisfactorily. The cast being moist was not easy to remove, and, at Dr. Burton's request, a tray was brought from Madame Bertrand's apartments, Madame herself holding it to receive the precious deposit. Mr. Ward, the ensign above alluded to, impressed with the value of such a memento, offered to

<sup>1</sup> The familiar "Ward portrait" of Napoleon in uniform, taken on the 6th, after 6 p.m., and similar to the "Chinese rice-paper drawing," to Welsh's sketch and to Rubidge's portrait in colours.

take charge of it at his quarters till it was dry enough to be removed to Dr. Burton's. Madame Bertrand, however, pleaded so hard to have the care of it, that the two gentlemen, both Irishmen and soldiers, yielded to her entreaties, and she withdrew with the treasure which she never afterwards would resign.

"There can scarcely, therefore, be a question that the casts and engravings<sup>1</sup> of Napoleon, now sold as emanating from the skill and reverence of Antommarchi, are from the original taken by Dr. Burton. We can only rest on circumstantial evidence, which the reader will allow is most conclusive. It is to be regretted that Dr. Burton's cast and that supposed to be taken by Antommarchi were not both demanded in evidence at the trial in 1821."<sup>2</sup>

That touch of Irish gallantry is pretty but *contrové*. Burton says no such thing; and it was in his absence and without his knowledge that Madame Bertrand seized upon the cast. Let us accept the Countess' 'tray'—whether

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the Calamatta plate.

<sup>2</sup> The Bow Street proceedings. This is beside the point. There was no question of a 'trial' of the respective claims of Burton and Antommarchi; nor had the latter anything to show in the way of a mask. Mrs. Ward writes this with the legend in her mind and gives it a retrospective force.

the 'precious deposit' was really the mould or the cast is not clear—and, of course, Mrs. Ward's conclusion, which is quite unexceptionable. Howbeit, written down some forty years after the event, from her husband's recollections, the passage has not the unimpeachable authority of the *Lowe Papers*.

But there may be further confirmation of Dr. Burton's story to come. Family chests have yielded not a little *inédit* matter in the way of St. Helena letters and diaries even during the past year or two, especially on the medical side, as distinct from the army and navy. It is more than probable that one or other of Burton's British confrères, acquainted at the time with all the facts of the case, will yet add posthumously the weight of his evidence in the Irishman's favour. Not that he needs it, for no unprejudiced reader who has followed the 'Antom-marchi Fiction' and perpended the 'Burton Facts' will hesitate for one moment as to which of the two to credit—and this purely on the merits of the two several accounts, with no thought at all of the respective characters of the rivals.

Let us, in a few lines, retrace the whole episode of the Mask and its aftermath.



The day of Napoleon's death there is talk, both on the English and the French side, of taking a cast, and plaster is asked for. On the morrow, May the 6th, Antommarchi refuses to attempt the task and invents a specious pretext to cover himself. Dr. Burton fashions a mould, with rather indifferent plaster. The next morning, 7th, on the arrival of better and fresher material, he takes his solitary cast—the *fons et origo* of all the death-masks of Napoleon that ever were or ever will be. It is left to dry the whole day, and when he returns on the morrow he finds that the front or 'face part' has been seized and packed up by the Bertrands. Then follows much unavailing correspondence, and he is inveigled and cajoled. On May 27th the Bertrands sail in the *Camel* with their treasure, and on June 13 Dr. Burton leaves for England in the *Abundance* with the "back part" of his cast, i.e. the occipital region, just one-third of the total skull.<sup>1</sup> They all reach London in

<sup>1</sup> This in disbelief of the theatrical and contradictory story told by Mrs. Ward, from Burton family gossip, and cited by Lady Burton, that the Surgeon, in his "deep mortification," dashed the "back of the head" (whether the cast or mould is not clear) into "a thousand pieces," and was afterwards offered £1000—a pound a piece!—for it by "Gall and Spurzheim, the phrenologists."

August and Burton returns to the charge. In September the case comes up at Bow Street and on a legal point Burton is non-suited. The Bertrands retain the cast—as we know it—and take it to France with them. Presumably in the summer of 1822, when Antommarchi is their guest, they produce that cast and the Italian makes a secondary, or piece-mould, upon it. From this he takes a secondary cast and hoards it for nearly eight years. Upon Dr. Burton's death, he brings it to light, palms it off as the "original" cast taken from the waste-mould (the fashioning of which he now publicly claims), and from it produces his 1833-4 'edition' of plaster and bronze masks, through how many trial processes of moulding and casting it is impossible to say. That secondary cast taken by the Italian in 1822 is presumably the "relic" still preserved at Bogota.

Meanwhile Burton's original cast, after doing duty once in 1822 as a reproductive medium, is put away and treasured by the Bertrands; from them it descends to their daughter, Madame Thayer; from her it passes to Prince Victor Napoleon, who owns it to-day.

That, it would seem, is the whole story.

**PART III**  
**THE SANKEY CAST**



### III

#### THE SANKEY CAST

**O**N the publication of Burton's cast by Antommarchi in 1833-4, after the first movement of surprise and incredulity had subsided, and the doctors, phrenologists and other students had regretfully admitted that the real Napoleon differed very materially in face and cranium from the conventional, certain close critics fastened upon the shape and position of the ear, which, we saw, Burton had so grossly distorted, and made bold to assert that the Italian must have badly retouched the mask he was credited with moulding and, notably, added that appendage from memory and as an afterthought, in Europe. That he did not do so and that he in no way endeavoured to 'improve' upon Burton is silently certified by the Sankey Cast.

What is the Sankey Cast ?

Amongst others present in the chamber while

Dr. Burton was moulding was a Mr. Rubidge, who had come out to St. Helena but a little while before. The surgeon mentions him by name once and also alludes to him as "the portrait-painter." Joseph William Rubidge, at this time quite a young man, was a professional artist and miniature painter, who attained a certain note by taking a portrait in colours of Napoleon lying dead ; the Emperor is laid out on the camp-bed, dressed in uniform and hat, with his head propped up on pillows, and with a crucifix placed on his breast. The original of that picture was, for many years, in the possession of a St. Helena collector in London. Rubidge sent his sketch to England by the *Rosario* to be reproduced, and himself returned to England, presumably by the *Abundance* with Dr. Burton—the *Times* notes his presence in London in the first week of September. The plate was engraved in a soft black and white *pointillé* (with a little vignette of the Tomb at foot) by the renowned stippler and mezzotinter Henry Meyer, and to-day figures in well-nigh every Napoleonic collection. It was published by the Colnaghis and also by David Cox of Nassau Street, and by the end of August the former had

disposed of over a thousand copies at seven-and-sixpence apiece. Though lacking the exotic quaintness of the Chinese 'rice-paper' drawing,<sup>1</sup> the Rubidge-Meyer print is devoid of the amateurish stiffness of Ensign Ward's attempt, and constitutes, artistically, the best of the four known studies of the uniformed Emperor, made late on the 6th or early on the 7th of May, whatever Lt. George Welsh, R.N., may have rather vaingloriously averred as to the fidelity of *Ms.*<sup>2</sup> Whether or no it possesses the moving interest of Marryat's, Crokat's and Ibbetson's 'sheeted' sketches of the forenoon of the 6th is a matter of opinion.

Rubidge dedicated his published picture to Madame Bertrand and expressly stated in the inscription-space that the original was "done in her presence and by her permission." We may fit the artist nicely into our 'Burton timetable' by assuming that he betook himself to Longwood in the late afternoon of the 6th to solicit that permission, and thus witnessed the moulding, and returned early on the 7th to

<sup>1</sup> Which it presumably inspired. Mr. Broadley is of the opinion that the Chinaman's work is but a copy of Rubidge.

<sup>2</sup> *The Graphic*, Sept. 9, 1911. Not 'Weigall' (*Century*, Ap., 1912).

carry out his design, and so was also present at the casting.

J. W. Rubidge's personality was overshadowed by his performance ; and the precious record he left of the dead Conqueror was all that a grateful posterity could point to heretofore. Whilst he himself lapsed into oblivion, his print passed through several states of the copper and was issued with variants of lettering—Sainsbury's impression in 1843 bearing in apposition to the title the epigraph "*Ut in morte recumbit.*"

The Rubidge family emigrated at an early date to Canada and the United States—there is a collateral descent in South Africa<sup>1</sup> and Western

<sup>1</sup> To Dr. John L. Rubidge, of Graaf Reinet, Cape Colony, I am indebted for the following passage from a letter, dated December 18, 1872, dealing with a question of succession :—

" I beg respectfully to notify you that the parties next of kin hereinafter mentioned are next of kin to the deceased Maria Mangin Brown ; namely, my nephew, Mr. Tom David Stafford Rubidge, of Morrisburgh, in the County of Dundas and Province of Ontario, Civil Engineer ; as the only son and representative of my brother Joseph William Rubidge, of London, artist, deceased ; my sister, Mrs. Eleanor Francis Lane, widow, of Dunfermline, Fifeshire ; my Brother Frederick Preston Rubidge, of the City of Ottawa in the Dominion of Canada, Civil Engineer ; and myself, Alfred Richard Rubidge, of Port Hope, in the Province of Ontario, in the Dominion of Canada, Barrister-at-Law." Dr. Rubidge adds that it was at the end of 1820 that J. W. Rubidge left England in company with his half-brother, Lieut. Robert Henry Rubidge, R.N. (gazetted June 2, 1808), who himself continued the journey to the Cape and there settled at the new year.



Australia—and the patronymic has long died out in England, its last appearance with us being in the maiden name of the mother of a lady now in business as a modiste in Belgravia. Of the artist himself, in the way of St. Helena journal or letters, there remains, alas, *keine Spur*. This is to be regretted the more, that Joseph William Rubidge was the author of another very memorable achievement: he took the death-cast of Napoleon now in the possession of Dr. Sankey, of Oxford. This cast is the only one, besides Burton's 'original,' which can be traced back to St. Helena. By virtue of some twelve years' seniority and of its local *provenance*, it holds a rank unique amongst all 'secondary' casts. If time and place, if date and origin go for aught in Napoleonic iconography and collecting—and if not, what does?—then it is almost as precious to the disciples of John Sainsbury as Prince Victor Napoleon's priceless treasure: and it is certainly as rare as it is beautiful.

The descent of the Sankey Cast is clear and concise. From its maker, J. W. Rubidge, it passed to the Rev. Mr. Boys at St. Helena, who bequeathed it to his daughter, Mrs. Sankey, and she to her son, the present owner.

The Rev. Richard Boys, sprung from an old Kentish stock of Edward III's reign, which gave a noted governor to Donington Castle during the Commonwealth,<sup>1</sup> was a striking figure and quite a 'character' at St. Helena throughout the Captivity. Officially Senior Chaplain of the H.E.I. Company's Establishment and Master of the 'Head School,' he was an earnest and enthusiastic tiller in the Lord's vineyard, and a most militant cleric withal. If his northern austerity had mellowed a little in those sub-tropical climes, and had even allowed him to experiment in very literal wine-making,<sup>2</sup> he never lost sight of the stimulating fact that the settlement he was in spiritual charge of had been named after a Christian Martyr; and he set his standard accordingly. His dominant virtues were his unswerving rectitude and his intrepidity of utterance, and, as usually happens, he must be saddled with the *défauts de ses qualités*: the former was apt to be self-conscious and the latter tactless. He went straight for

<sup>1</sup> Add. MSS., 33,896, ff. 20, 33, 54.

<sup>2</sup> In July, 1824, the Rev. Mr. Boys submitted at the St. Helena Flower Show some samples of wine made from local grapes. (*Proceedings of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of St. Helena, 1824.*)

the core of things<sup>1</sup> and spoke loud and fearlessly ; and this, joined to a strongly evangelical, not to say revivalist, bent, won him, from the flippant, the sobriquet of ' Boanerges Boys.' The Senior Chaplain was the *one* Englishman who durst stand up to Lowe and take overt exception to some of his civil enactments, in the spirit of pastoral solicitude, as *he* deemed, in that of faction, as the Governor averred.<sup>2</sup> He would scourge vice in high places as readily as reprimand his head scholars ; and the three several sermons he preached against, or rather at, Admiral Plampin and his irregular *ménage* were one of the sensations of the Captivity. Needless to say, Mr. Boys made enemies in the Plantation House set and the Services by his rather self-righteous *maranatha*, spoken or written,<sup>3</sup> but

<sup>1</sup> The utmost lapse into deviousness one finds record of is in the theme of one of his three publications, *Primitive Obligations*.

<sup>2</sup> His *démêlés* with the Governor are set forth in detail in the *Lowe Papers*. (In this connection, those interested in Boys will find a long note about him on p. 114 of *A Polish Exile with Napoleon*.) Though Lowe disliked Boys he could not but recognize his parts, and writes to Lord Bathurst that " he is by no means deficient in ability " (Add. MSS., 20,140, f. 47 b). Such commendation from Sir Hudson was praise indeed !

<sup>3</sup> He conducted the local news-sheet and magazine, the *St. Helena Register*.

he little recked such estrangements as those : his manly virtues, his good and generous heart, his energetic well-doing,<sup>1</sup> his love of truth and his splendid Christianity brought him a host of friends, and he was long held in the kindest remembrance by hundreds who had passed through his hands as pedagogue, sat at his feet as chaplain, or shared his hospitality as a St. Helena bigwig. In this last he was ably seconded by his wife, who, according to a grateful deponent,<sup>2</sup> was a "true Mother in Israel" to all those young men unattached, civil, naval and military—and, thank God, there were quite a

<sup>1</sup> Boys preconized the movement for the liberation of all children born of slaves, which was carried to a successful issue by Lowe in 1818. He may be said to have inspired and engineered the whole thing ; though the English Press were mistaken in attributing to him the actual passing of the measure.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Thomas Robson, author of *St. Helena Memoirs* (1827), in a long note on Mr. and Mrs. Boys, on pp. 64-6. An extract will suffice : " It is but due to this faithful Minister of Christ, who, like his fellow-servants in all ages, has experienced much of the enmity and endured the malice of an unbelieving world, to bear testimony to the excellence of his character " ; and the writer proceeds to quote Lieut. Wood, R.N., to this effect : " Mr. Boys was only to be well known to be heartily and fully loved ; for, for a long while, we had been greatly prejudiced against him by the scandalous reports we were in the habit of hearing from many quarters, and we only regretted we did not know him before. . . . He watched over us as a father over his family and sought by every means to promote our welfare. . . . "

few—who did *not* devote their whole leisure to the profane relaxations of the Rock, “this once abandoned profligate Island,”<sup>1</sup> to wit, gaming, stage plays, cards, the turf, drabbing and, above all, the cult of Dionysus.

It was in 1811 that the Rev. Richard Boys went out to St. Helena, and, with a two-years’ furlough in 1818–20 (mainly by way of respite from Sir Hudson) he remained there until the end of 1829, a year after Dr. Burton’s death. He then returned to his motherland, and after holding a succession of cures in his native county, settled down in 1854 as incumbent of Loose, near Staplehurst, where he died in 1867 at the age of eighty-one. He had brought back with him from St. Helena in 1829 the death-cast of Napoleon. This fact he often impressed upon his granddaughter, Miss Emily Sankey, who, being then in her ‘twenties,’ spent the last few years of his life with him—she herself now resides at Oxford and has given me that understanding.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lieut. Wood’s expression. He was one of the band of serious-minded young men who met at the Chaplain’s house for religious exercises. Dr. Chaplin has dubbed them, wittily, the ‘St. Helena Boys’ Brigade.’

<sup>2</sup> Miss Sankey and Dr. Sankey are much of an age. There is a far older brother, now in his eighty-third year, who remembers the cast from his earliest childhood—that is, the middle ‘thirties.

Throughout his various changes of abode Mr. Boys jealously guarded the cast, and in 1862, no doubt at the suggestion of his daughter, Mrs. Sankey, who had spent seven years at St. Helena (1811-18) and vividly recalled Napoleon, and of his son, Archdeacon Markby Boys, who knew the value of documentation, he certified the genuineness thereof in these words, written with his own hand :—

“ LOOSE, 20th October, 1862.

“ This Cast was taken from the face of Napoleon Buonaparte as he lay dead at Longwood, St. Helena, by Mr. Rubidge, 7 May, 1821 ; which I do hereby certify.

“ R. Boys, M.A.,

“ Incumbent of Loose, and late  
Senr. Chaplain, St. Helena.”

I have compared the writing of the above attestation (which is fixed to the framework of the glass case containing the cast) with Boys' holograph letters to Lowe in 1820 [*Add. MSS.*, 20,213, ff. 1-52] and not only find it the same hand, but almost as firm and virile, and with nearly as much sweep in the quasi-monogram



THE REV. RICHARD BOYS, M.A.  
*From a daguerrotype in the possession of his grandson, Dr. J. O. Sankey*







of the initials ' R ' and ' B. ' Of course, there is a glaring error in the above. It is the technical inaccuracy, the confusion of terms, which they *all* fall into, from Graves downwards. A verbal misprision never invalidates *facts* : and here it is so obvious as to be instantly discounted. No ' cast ' can be taken from a *face* : we must supply a mould—waste-mould, piece-mould, or what not—as the indispensable link. This premised, the markworthy things here are the certified name of Rubidge and the date ' 7 May 1821 ' : and these must stand. I will not offend against Mr. Boys' memory by doubting either his life-long veracity or his possession of all faculties at 76 ; on the unbeliever, should one arise and join issue, shall rest the full *onus probandi*. This attestation, then, is valid ; it cannot be brushed aside ; and be it said in no disparagement of others, it has the documentary worth of a round two-thirds of the St. Helena depositions upon which theories have been propounded, polemics engaged and books and pamphlets indited.

The question next arises, What did Rubidge do ?

At first blush it might appear that he himself

fashioned a waste-mould on Napoleon's face, and produced therefrom a finished mask, in every way original, and independent of all alien workmanship. But that was not so. I have submitted the Sankey Cast to Dr. Arthur Keith, F.R.S., Hunterian Professor of the Royal College of Surgeons, President of the Anthropological Society, and the leading craniologist in Europe, whose interest in the skull of Napoleon is second only to his studious curiosity in those more recondite organs which were rescued from the post-mortem, and have recently constituted the *pièces justificatives* of a very learned lecture from his lips.

Prof. Keith examined the Sankey Cast, which he thought a most incisive and beautiful one, and compared it with Dr. Silk's old "Antom-marchi" plaster and with the Napoleon death-mask "of commerce,"—the modern reproductions by Messrs. Brucciani and others—and he found by scrupulous measurements that they agreed in every single particular. Now it is absolutely impossible for two moulds to be fashioned on the face of the dead, whether by the same person or by two different ones, with or without an interval of time, and have them

alike in the minutest details. The plaster cannot be laid twice in exactly the same manner ; the soft, yielding parts of the face do not respond again in precisely the same way ; and even if the main features are strictly similar, there is perforce a marked difference in, at the very least, the set of the lips, the protrusion of the eye-balls, the line of the closed lids, the outer angle of the eyes, the commissures of the mouth, the compression of the wings of the nose, and the hang of the ear-lobe. The Sankey Cast, Prof. Keith had no hesitation in declaring, is derived from the same original matrix as the " Antommarchi mask," that is from Burton's waste-mould ; but as this was destroyed after doing duty but once, it must necessarily proceed directly from Burton's ' parent ' cast.

How ? There's the rub !

One had fain taken the line of least resistance and with a facile presumption replied : " Through Antommarchi. The Sankey Cast, indeed venerable in appearance, is one of the 1833 edition." But Boys' attestation is there in disproof, and even, in default, there is his return from St. Helena in 1829 with the cast, four years before the Italian gave Burton's handiwork to the world.

The only plausible hypothesis is the following :—

Some time in the afternoon of the 7th of May, whilst Burton's cast, as yet unabridged, lay hard and dry in the chamber, of which "the portrait-painter" was needs free, Rubidge, *au fait* as an artist with plastic processes, must have taken a clay 'squeeze,' or a wax impression, or some other non-plaster negative of the 'front part' of the said cast ; this unknown to Burton, but quite conceivably with the privity of some member of the Household. This 'secondary' mould, whatever its nature, Rubidge cut into five pieces, the largest comprising just the bare oval of the face, from the roots of the hair to the turn of the chin (i.e. the 'mask' in its narrowest sense) and from it, some time before he sailed, executed the Sankey Cast, with the excellent gypsum which, *pace* Burton and Antommarchi, *was* to be found, and at leisure properly worked up, within an easy ride of his dwelling.<sup>1</sup> He then sandpapered, or otherwise polished, his cast (preserving nevertheless the lines of cleavage of his mould) with

<sup>1</sup> v. p. 145.

the obvious intent of imitating an artist's plaster-bust of the period, and have it suggest less an actual face, dead or alive, than the marble presentment of that face. It was, in its way, a concession to the sham-classicism of the day, a very humble tribute to the sculpture and the glyptics of the Davidian school, an attenuated echo of Greek impassiveness as against the life of a Michael Angelo . . . or a Rodin. For, with an untouched expert's death-mask, even at the stage of the earliest secondary cast, such as the one of Napoleon III shown me by Messrs. Brucciani, or the half-dozen at the National Portrait Gallery, there is nothing whatever of that marmoreal smoothness of effect. The grain of the skin, the wrinkles and other rugosities, the pore-texture almost, are exactly reproduced; there is something uncanny in the fidelity to nature. With an 'original' cast, chipped out of the waste-mould, the translation becomes really repellent; one such, taken from the face of an aged lady recently deceased, showed a minute reticulation like the skin-crinklings of a shrivelled apple. But Burton, we have seen, was an amateur, who, after riding roughshod over such out-

standing features as the ears, would certainly not bother himself about crow's feet and 'calipers.' Precisely what degree of smoothness in the Sankey Cast is due to Dr. Burton, what to Rubidge and what to the dead countenance itself—and, paradoxically, *la mort déride*—is quite impossible to say.

Let us consider awhile the Sankey Cast as a presentment of Napoleon.

If one acquainted merely with the portraits and prints, the sculptured busts, the coins and medals of the Emperor must needs share the surprise of the sceptics of 1834 in presence of Antommarchi's production (precisely the same in size as this), he, at all events, is here gratified by a more æsthetic impression which at once supervenes. No vandal hand has painted, gilded, varnished, white-washed or otherwise titivated the cast, as is so often the case. Time, which imparts its patina to the most garish stone, has turned the crude chalky white to a soft, shadowy grey, that simulates the "ashes of death" more nearly than any marble or alabaster could do. It has given this mask, with the chiselled nose and the rounded brow,

though not the tint, at least the 'tone,' of an old carving in ivory. The pallid clear-cut face of the dead Consul is doubly evoked, in configuration and in grain. For, as they all agreed in saying, it is the likeness of Bonaparte after the period of Brumaire ; and its happiest description is from Lord Rosebery's pen. The mining disease and, still more, the action of death had hollowed out the cheeks, sunk the temples, attenuated the whole face, and given it the beauty and slenderness of youth. But those could have no effect upon the bony parts, such as the cranium and the jaws, and it is precisely here that preconceived opinions were, and are, most rudely upset. The cast comprises a little more than half the total superficies of the cranium, to wit, the frontal bone, the two temporals and the anterior quarter of the parietals ; adding the face, it renders some two-thirds of the total skull. The smallness of the cranium is striking, even without the customary slight reduction for the swelling of the plaster : one French anatomist in 1834 declared it, in the frontal region especially, *petit, étroit et mesquin*, in comparison with what the busts and portraits had led one to expect—

still, that was only relative. Napoleon's head was not large and the forehead was not unusually broad. According to Antommarchi, who took the measurements after death, the greatest circumference of the cranium was 20 inches 10 lines, old French reckoning, which is  $22\frac{1}{2}$  inches, English. That is the average record for the tape amongst the educated middle classes in our country. Not until it passes  $22\frac{1}{2}$  inches does a head, with us, *begin* to be 'large.'<sup>1</sup> As for the brow, measured on the Sankey Cast, it is  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches across the frontal bone, from temple to temple, from 'ideality' to 'ideality,' as the phrenologists say. That is an equally ordinary width. The only at all uncommon breadth in the whole cranium is at the sides, in the parietals, just over the ears. To put it in a homely way, Napoleon would have

<sup>1</sup> The phrenologist, H. G. Atkinson, allowed half an inch more: "The full average circumference of the *original* cast of a well-developed head I consider to be 24 inches; deducting an inch for the swelling of the plaster, this would show the real head to have been 23, which I do not consider to be an over-estimate: for I have compared the measurements of a great number of casts in my possession—that of Coleridge even measures 25 inches" (*Phrenological Journal*, 1845, p. 142). The editor comments thus: "In the course of our experience, heads above  $23\frac{1}{2}$  in circumference have been but rarely met with:  $22\frac{1}{2}$  is so common that we consider this a fair or average size in the middle and upper ranks of life."



worn a 'seven' hat eased a little right and left.

Seen in profile, the brow conforms still less to received opinion. It does not rise sheer to any height, nor does it continue the line of the nose in the least : it describes a very even and very beautiful curve backward. There is nothing in the cast of that expansive brow of the Olympian Jove, nothing of Trajan's massiveness, nothing of that vituline side-face of Minerva, nothing, too, of that columnar Nero-ran neck, which the portraits and medals<sup>1</sup> have stereotyped and transmitted for so many years : save for the broad jowl and the well-developed 'masseter,' nothing could be less like the conventional Napoleon than the true one. And even in this lower part of the face a discrepancy must be noted. In the cast, just as in the earliest Bonaparte portraits, the jaws do not close after the manner of the accepted *cliché* of the Imperial days. Contrarily to what one finds

<sup>1</sup> Some of Droz' medals are especially heavy in feature and expression, whilst aiming at Roman dignity and the suggestion of power. In one of Geoffroy's (December 31, 1807) the profile is almost that of Antinous. Droz' medallic type apparently served as model for that batch of sham-antique wax medallions of Napoleon which has flooded the curio-shops of London for the past ten years or more.

in the highest and handsomest type of Tuscan face, Napoleon's jaws did not wholly and squarely meet, being slightly overhung in front—they were more English than Italian—and the exceedingly short upper lip can hardly have screened this impendency.<sup>1</sup> When the teeth were clenched tight, so as to swell the temporal muscle, the edges of the lower incisors must have been a little above and in retreat of the upper. To adopt the terms of a popular fallacy, the mouth was not so "strong" as it is conventionally depicted, and even the chin, had it not been for the development of the ridge and its integument, would probably have shown a certain "weakness" in profile. That chin, too, was flattered and symmetrized by the artists: in the cast its right-hand 'point' is quarter of an inch lower than the left.

In the face of these defects, if such they be, one might perhaps infer that the vaunted

<sup>1</sup> This is especially well shown in the line engraving of the First Consul picked up in Paris by the Rev. Dawson Warren at the end of 1801 (Mr. Broadley's *Journal of a British Chaplain in Paris during the Peace Negotiations of 1801-2*, p. 65. Chapman and Hall. 1913). The likeness is after Isabey, and has all the alertness of the early Consular portraits. The nose and the upper lip are lengthened a shade, and the chin is that of Canova's bust.

pulchritude of Napoleon was a myth, and that the cast gave the lie to those many beholders who, as he lay in state on May 6th and 7th, exclaimed : "*How beautiful !*" It were a great mistake. Apart from the subtle sense of colouration which, like a mezzotint or a soft stipple, the Sankey Cast awakens, there abide in it grace, harmony, purity of line, refinement, sensitiveness and an almost effeminate delicacy. In the shaping of the nose there is exquisite beauty ; in the set of the parted lips there is suffering and melancholy, a tremor that is rather felt than seen. But of strength, of will, of tyrant power, one can perceive no sign ; and, once again, it seems as if with Napoleon they must have resided in the eyes. And of that sullen heaviness of countenance, which in so many portraits of the Emperor is quite repellent, there is, of course, no trace in the cast.

Two explanations were offered in 1834, on the publication of the death-mask, to account for the difference between the 'conventional' and the real Napoleon. The phrenologists suggested that the cranium had notably diminished at St. Helena. It was the view of Andrew Combe that "the size of the brain had in prob-

ability already decreased by the combined effects of inactivity and disease."<sup>1</sup> And with it the brain-box. You smile! That, in cases of atrophy or hemiplegia, one side of the head should in the course of ten or twelve years show signs of depression, is rational. That a stomach disease, which impaired Napoleon's mental vigour only for the last six months of his life, should effect such a change, is a preposterous contention.

The other explanation is, of course, the right one. As Napoleon rose in eminence and in fame, so his painters, sculptors and medallists, the men of the *Consulat à vie* and the Empire, idealized him more and more. So stupendous a brain, so god-like an intellect, seemed naturally to require a mighty tabernacle to lodge it; and, unconsciously truckling to the phrenologists,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Phrenological Journal*, 1836-7, p. 418.

<sup>2</sup> In fairness to the phrenologists, be it remembered that there are several saving clauses to their great "law" that the "power of the mind is in proportion to the size of the brain," as outwardly indicated by the size of the cranium. The first is "*ceteris paribus*," which signifies what you please; the second is that *mental* power is not synonymous with *intellectual*; and the third that it is really the *quality* of the brain and not the *size* that matters. It was this last salvo that especially aroused Holmes' ridicule, for though it embodied an irrefragable truth, yet how could "Messrs. Bumpus and Crane" gauge the quality of the cerebrum from the *outside*

the artists evolved a conventional type, a capacious, massive, ponderous and altogether disproportionate head, compact of impeccable Attic features, morose Roman *gravitas*, and a stony, Sphingian stare ; and the naked brow being the first thing that rivets attention, they heightened and broadened this and they raised it squarely, or even outwardly, from the temples, and imparted to it a quite abnormal expanse. In witness whereto, take the work of Gérard, Gros (later manner), David and his derivatives (Steuben, Vauthier, Hervier, Charlet, Eastlake, Meissonier and many more), Horace Vernet, Girodet, Hodges (no likeness), Hubert (Elba), Tofanelli—one excepts the Coronation portraits of Lefèvre, Vanderwal and Garneray, and the big Bosio-Rados plate—Vigneux, Gosse and others, till you reach the frontal monstrosity of Delaroche's *Ste. Hélène* and Grévedon's lithograph, the bloated severity of our own Wright's sepia medallion and the stonewall effect of Sant. That is the Napoleon the craftsmen created, the

through a skull consisting of two plates with an appreciable and variable space between ? They professed to do it on the principle that you can tell the condition of the tree from an examination of the bark : it is a diagnosis which applies rather to disease than to health ; and it is only one off your telling a rotten egg by the way the shell cracks !

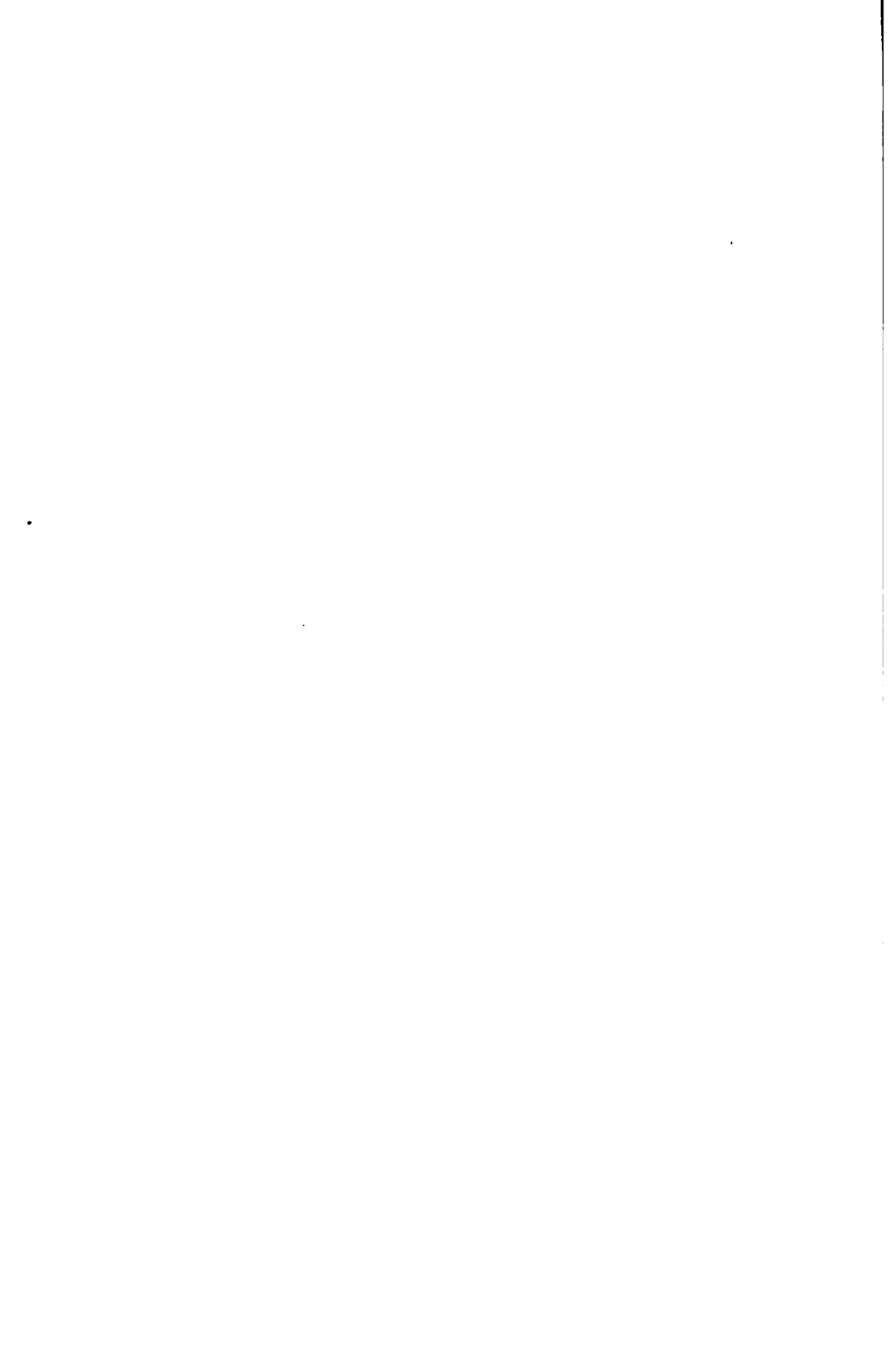
Napoleon most of us know. But it was not always so. As in the cast, so in the early portraits of Bonaparte, roughly from 1796 till 1802, before that systematic flattery had set in—if to overload be to flatter—in the work, that is, of Boilly, Appiani, Dutertre, Bouillon, Boizot (medallion), Trolli, Gros ("Pont d'Arcole") and his many derivatives, such as the fine Nettling plate of 1800,<sup>1</sup> Greuze, Ingres and Isabey; and, to a less degree, of Guérin and Châtillon—Rusca, Le Dru and Fragonard attempt no likeness, and the "Milan portrait," incised, scraped or stippled *ad nauseam*, is but a Dantesque impression—and including David d'Angers' head and Ceracchi's and Canova's busts,<sup>2</sup> in these, I say, the forehead is prominent only over the root of the nose (frontal sinus) and over the eyebrows, where the phrenologists locate the

<sup>1</sup> Broadley Collection. Unknown to Nagler.

<sup>2</sup> Of the earlier sculptors, Canova and Houdon alone seem to have caught the shape of the brow, the latter raising it a little. The former accentuated the short protrusive upper lip, and by the same token increased the chin. Ceracchi's likeness, as rendered by H. Richter's engraving, is not so good. Of the later sculptors, Chaudet, basing his likeness upon the death-mask, is naturally the best. What is probably the *truest* presentment of Napoleon in marble in this country, curiously enough, lies, as I write, half-hidden away in an antique shop in Hanway Street. It is a bust by a nameless chiseller, possibly after Chaudet. The harmony of the features is almost that of



THE SANKEY CAST, SIDE FACE





"perceptive faculties," and it then curves gently and evenly backward from that level, and at the sides, just above the temples, it has a marked inward slope, the "reflective faculties" being nowise emphasized. To suggest, as did some of Gall's disciples, that Bonaparte chiefly "perceived," and so assumed the "astigmatic frown," whereas Napoleon mainly "reflected," and so brought out the upper parts of the brow, was ingenious: but it cannot apply to the great Captain who till the very end won his battles by his miraculous *coup d'œil*.

If one dare fix upon a single name of the early 'truthful' artists enumerated above, the Sankey Cast most nearly recalls in profile Dutertre's 'Egyptian' sketch of the "Général-en-Chef": were it too bold to assert that the Desert and the Rock are thus linked in pictorial fidelity—*ex Africa semper aliquid veri?*—and that much of what intervened in Europe was fancy portraiture?

the cast; the brow is not broadened—straightened a trifle upwards perhaps—the mouth with its short upper lip is as in the early portraits, the chin is not unduly symmetrized, the nose has its perfect beauty, and the cheeks great purity of line. A few doors off only is *another* bust, with all the conventional exaggerations and the customary heaviness and sullenness of expression.

But it was ever fancy that found favour ; and here the conventional exaggeration, the *cliché* of David, was universally accepted. Artists, serious and satirical, sculptors<sup>1</sup> and medallists, actors in their make-up, writers and historians and poets all perpetuated it—especially the poets. With us, Southey and Byron, Scott and Hazlitt adopted the myth of the massive head and the huge frontal bone. Long afterwards Browning let the reader infer it :—

“ . . . the prone brow  
Oppressive with its mind.”

Heine, prince of Napoleonolaters, has much the same suggestion—the cosmic thoughts garred in the Titan skull—and in his untranslatable prose-poem notes, as well, the marmorean cast, or better, perhaps, the alabaster ; for it was a pellucid pallor, through which life could be descried coursing :<sup>2</sup>

“ Auch das Gesicht hatte jene Farbe die wir bei marmornen Griechen-und Römerköpfen finden. Die Stirne war nicht so klar, es nisteten

<sup>1</sup> With their chisel and with their pen ; *cf.*, “ Let us take, for example, the preponderant brow of a Napoleon.” (Albert Toft : *Modelling and Sculpture*, p. 46.)

<sup>2</sup> Ménéval.

darauf die Geister zukünftiger Schlachten, und es zuckte bisweilen über dieser Stirn ; und Das waren die schaffenden Gedanken, die grossen Siebenmeilenstiefel-Gedanken, womit der Geist des Kaisers unsichtbar über die Welt hinschritt.”<sup>1</sup>

The French went to the greatest length. When Victor Hugo sang of

“Ce front prodigieux, ce crâne fait au moule  
Du globe impérial,”

he was merging from the hyperbolical into the hydrocephalic. Thiers surpassed it, however :

“The vastest head ever recorded by Science,”

no less. Which would include all the monstrosities in the anatomical museums !

Leaving the speculations of writers for the testimonies of actual beholders, so true is it that one sees what he is led to expect, that not only have hundreds of contemporaries of Napoleon, from Bourrienne to Madame Junot, espoused the convention and abetted the conceit, but even surgeons, like Henry and Shortt, and Burton himself—who took the mask—and

<sup>1</sup> Das Buch Le Grand.

Guillard of the Exhumation, have all borne witness to the 'capacious' or the 'colossal' brow.

But, *there* is the Cast, from Burton's moulding. And *there* is Antommarchi's tape.<sup>1</sup>

*You cannot get over those.*

And, verily, the story of Napoleon's death-mask presents no more striking irony than this coming together of the Irish surgeon and the Italian, whom we have so sharply contrasted and so diversely labelled, to make common cause, in the laying of an iconographical myth, against the lyre and the chisel, the brush and the pen alike.

Besides the Sankey Cast and Burton's "original," can any other death-mask of Napoleon be traced to St. Helena? It is extremely improbable. Rubidge, presumably, took that

<sup>1</sup> As Napoleon's cranium was in perfect proportion, front and back (if there was any unusual development it was at the sides), there is no possibility that by an exceptional flatness in the occipital region—the part missing in the cast—the measurement of Antommarchi for the total circumference should have been correspondingly reduced. The phrenologists of 1834 were the very first to assert that the back of the head (which they so nicely graduated *in absentia*) must have been very well developed. They did not venture to deny Napoleon either "concentrativeness" or the domestic faculties.

one and only cast from his piece-mould ; his was a nonce achievement. As for any other possible operator on similar lines during that afternoon of the 7th of May, whether artist or surgeon, none but Dr. Rutledge seems at all likely to have had even the opportunity afforded him : and there is not the faintest allusion or indication that he tried his hand at any plastic work.

There is a cast now at Clifton, in the possession of Heber Mardon, Esq., brought to my notice by Dr. St. John Bullen of that town, which I have collated with the Sankey Cast. It is from a different piece-mould and the lines of cleavage do not tally. It lacks the incisiveness, the austerity, the tone, the "ashes," in a word, the beauty of the Oxford relic. It is *attributed* to Dr. Arnott at St. Helena. It would appear rather to be one of the early Antommarchi edition, not the "first state," once painted, and therefore a sort of half-sister to the specimens treasured in various French and foreign museums. Arnott, we know, took a sketch of Napoleon on May 6. Upon him Miss Tarbell boldly fathered the egregious "Wax Cast" : it is but straining the point a little to credit him with a

plaster one as well ! There is no scrap of writing to authenticate the Clifton mask from the pen of any one at St. Helena at the time, or remotely connected with the Island. What written "attestation" there is attached to it proceeds, and that traditionally, from a certain Court jeweller in London who once owned it ; and even this is unsigned and undated. He is supposed to have been presented with the cast by Dr. Arnott on November 15, 1821—at which date the surgeon was still at St. Helena. Such "documentation" is inadequate ; though preferred by a trio of dealers as uncritical originally as they were subsequently fortunate. The goldsmith may have confused Antommarchi with Arnott (just as Mrs. Jackson lumped them together) or even have added a little professional, and very pardonable, lustre to his 'relic' by endowing it, retrospectively, with a local habitation and a name. *Vous êtes orfèvre, Monsieur Josse !*

We recapitulated the story of the Mask at the end of Part II. Let us fit the Sankey Cast into our scheme and by the same token formulate a few conclusions :—

(1) All death-masks of Napoleon are derived from one and the same original mould, as is proved by the eyes and lids, the lips, and especially the ears.

(2) That mould, a waste-mould, was fashioned on the face of Napoleon by Dr. Francis Burton in the late afternoon of the 6th May, 1821.

(3) One cast only—the 'parent' or 'original' cast—was taken, on the morning of May 7, by Dr. Burton from his mould and the latter was necessarily, and not accidentally, broken in the process. This cast is now in the possession of Prince Victor Napoleon at Brussels.

(4) From this cast, on May 7th, Joseph William Rubidge took a "secondary" non-plaster impression.

(5) From this cast, also, when in the Bertrands' possession, Antommarchi, in (?) the summer of 1822, took a "secondary" plaster piece-mould.

(6) From his secondary mould Rubidge, before leaving St. Helena (i.e. between May 7

and June 13, 1821) took the plaster-cast now in Dr. Sankey's possession.

(7) From his secondary mould Antommarchi, in 1822, produced a secondary cast—now presumably at Bogota—and laid it aside until after Dr. Burton's death.

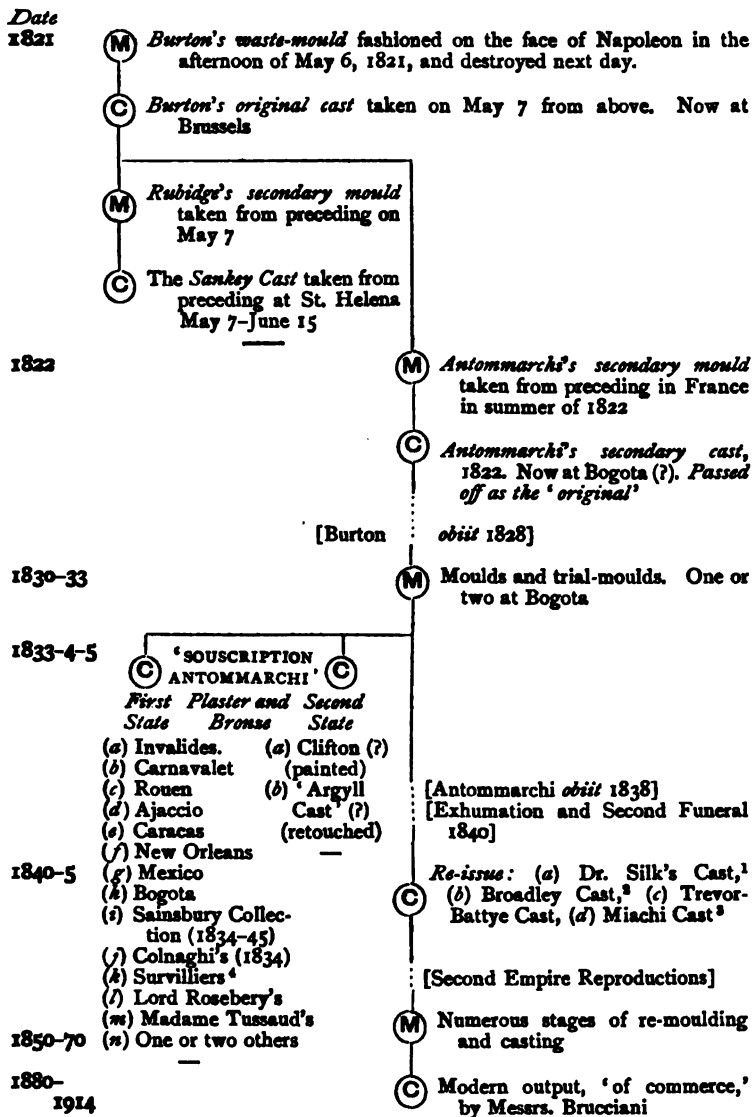
(8) In 1830, and after, Antommarchi made various moulds and trial-moulds from the preceding cast; from them proceeded the plaster and bronze masks of the 1833-4 "subscription issue."

(9) To that issue, or to 'editions' immediately following, belong the sundry death-masks of Napoleon, of known antiquity, now found in museums and private collections.

To put it in pictorial form :—



# NAPOLEON'S DEATH-MASK



<sup>1</sup> For a long term of years in the possession of Sir William Gull. Filled in and painted.

<sup>2</sup> For a long term of years in the family of a Brussels artist. Gilded.

<sup>3</sup> Sotheby's, June 13, 1913.

<sup>4</sup> Sotheby's, January 26, 1914.

Like Burton's time-table we drew up, the above pedigree is a little conjectural perhaps : if a better one can be framed, I shall be happy to consider it. I do not pretend to have exhausted the question of Napoleon's death-mask : something remains to be delved and much to be indited. At least one of the conclusions I have arrived at is open to discussion ; and there may be a touch of fancy in a thing or two I have written in the spirit of deep reverence for the great Man. For the furtherance of simple truth I invite that discussion. But whatever is advanced cannot, methinks, upset Dr. Burton's story and his claim to be the sole mould-maker, any more than it can, in any way, detract from the One who in the nothingness and nescience of death still lent himself to the plastic art of the British surgeon. Of the latter, it may be hoped that, by virtue of his achievement, he will live in the remembrance of his fellow-countrymen. Of the former . . . such hope expressed were sheer impertinence ! Long years ago he towered above the world and rose to deathless fame, serene, triumphant over obloquy and persecution alike. As with that other

Immortal who passed in the same waxing  
year :

“ He has outsoared the shadow of our night ;  
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,  
And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
Can touch him not and torture not again.”

*He*, too, was best rendered and is best recalled  
by a mask, no less interesting in its way than  
Napoleon's. They face each other rather aptly  
at Mudie's.



# APPENDIX

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

YEAR	I. ANTOMMARCHI LEGEND	II. SUB-LEGENDS	III. THE BURTON FACTS
1821—	[St. Helena, May 10-20] <i>The Times</i> , Sept. 11, and eight other papers	1821. (A) ' <i>Burton and Mitchell</i> ' story [St. Helena, May 15] <i>Sun</i> , July 9, and fourteen other papers	1821. [St. Helena, May 20 (?)] Lowe's Despatch, June 13 [Bow Street, Sept. 5] <i>Courier</i> , Sept. 10
1825—	<i>Derniers Momens</i>		
1828—	de Chambure		
1830—	Hazlitt		
1833—	Antommarchi's Prospec- tus—Tissot		
1834—	<i>Times</i> , May 16—Cala- matta — Medico-Phreno- logical Polemic		
1835—	[exposed]		Dr. Graves
1840—	Sainsbury Catalogue		
1841—	Horne	Vom Berge	
1843—	<i>Weekly Dispatch</i>	(B) ' <i>Exhumation Mask</i> ' Napoleon Museum— <i>Britannia</i>	
1845—	Mitchell		
1853—	Bordot		
1854—	Bégin		
1855—		(C) ' <i>Wax Cast</i> ' <i>Illustrated London News</i>	
1865—	Huard		1866 (?). Mrs. Ward
1866—	Challamel		
1869—	José M. Antommarchi		
1873—	Rojas		
1886—		Seeley	
1888—	<i>L'Ami des Monuments</i>		
1890—	<i>Times</i> Advt.		
1892—	Hutton		
1893—	Dodd Catalogue		Lady Burton
1894—	Didot—France—Masson —Hutton		
1895—	Dayot—Liisberg		
1897—	Baring Gould		
1899—	Capelletti—Werckmeister		
1900—	Rosebery		[revived]
1901—	Tarbell	Tarbell	
1902—	Rose—Lacroix—Watson		
1903—	Jackson		
1909—	[doubted]		Masson
1910—	Sloane—Montorgeuil		[named]
1911—	Stella—Bénézit		
1912—	Trade Catalogues		
1913—	[doubted]		Cahnet



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